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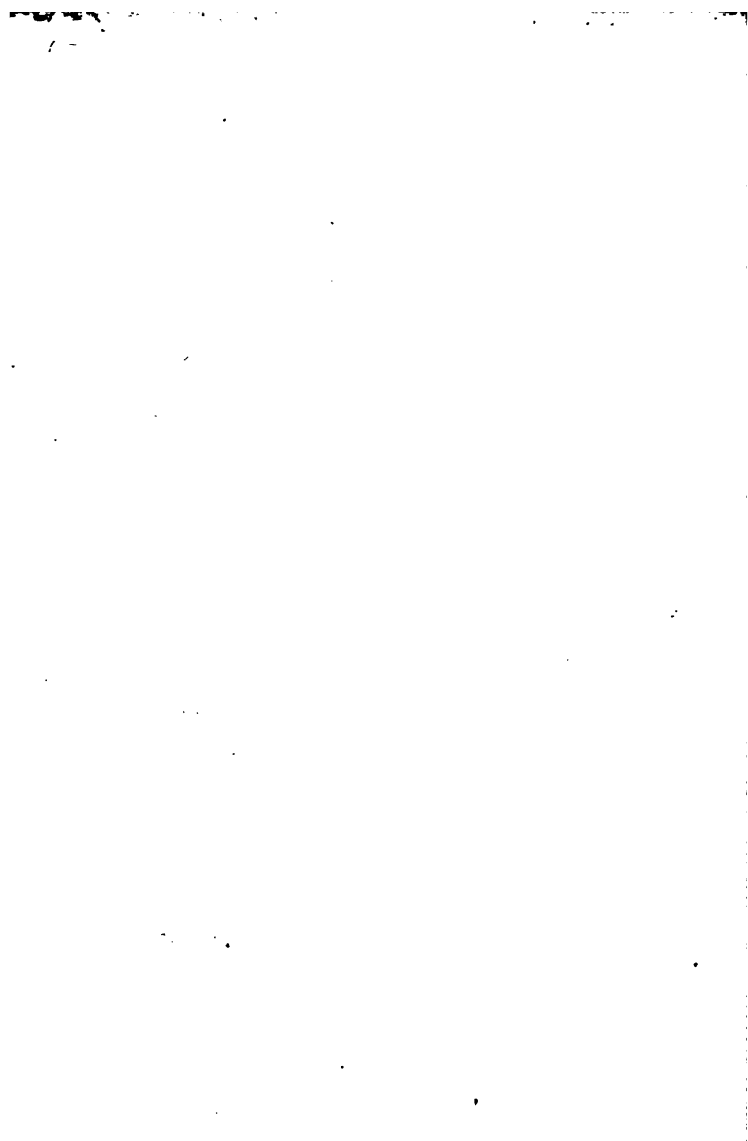


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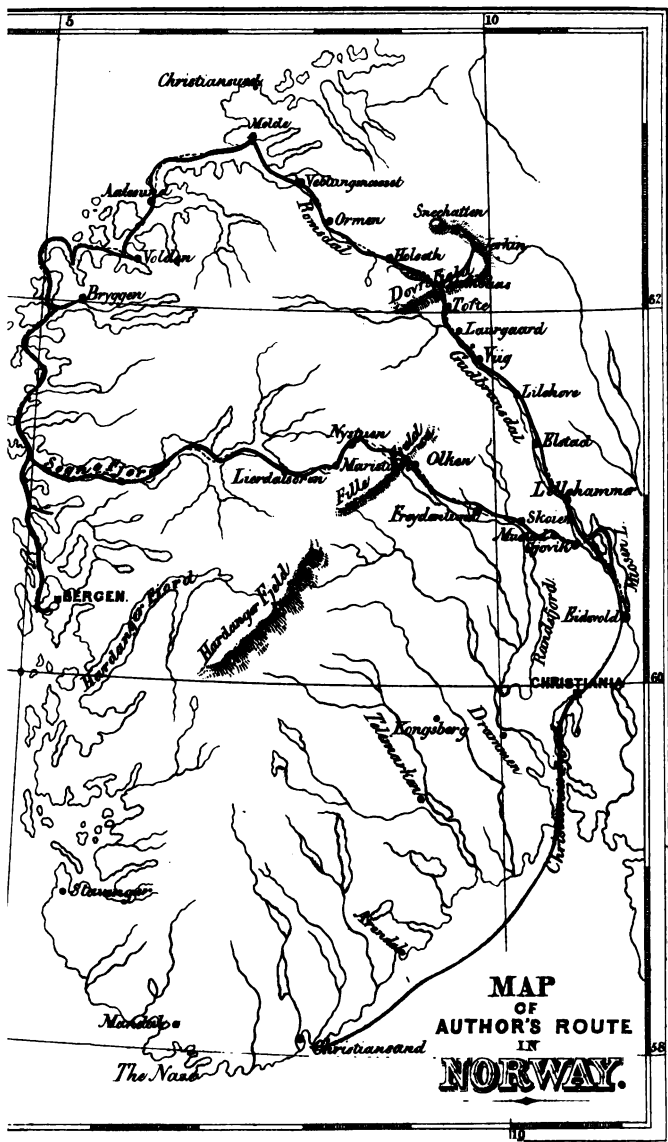


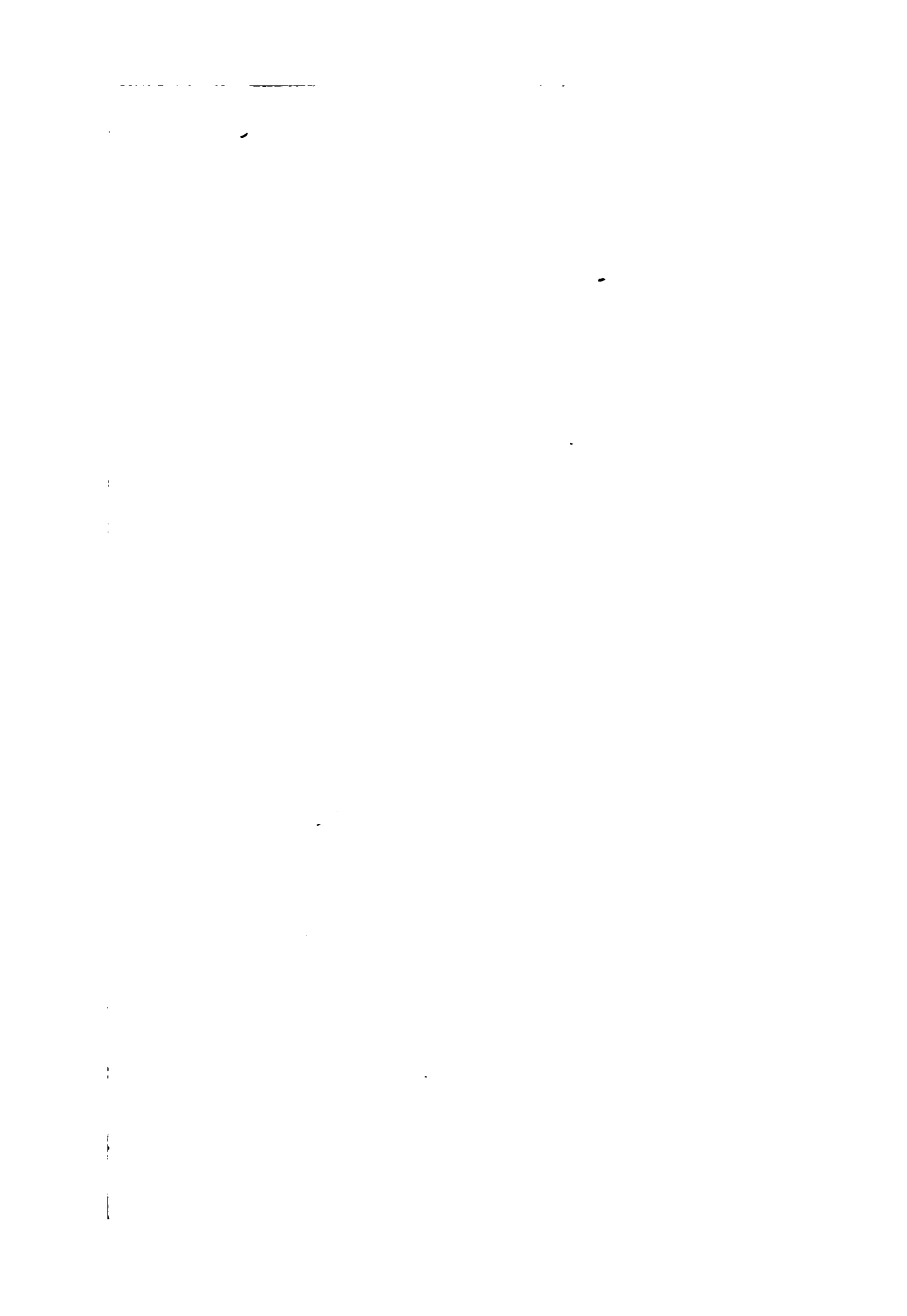


Presented to
Mr. Edmund Abbott
with the best wishes of
The Author.

Barlinton,
Staff^u.
August 1861.









A TOUR
IN
NORWAY.

BY
WILLIAM SCOTT.

* * * "LET US LOOK ABOUT
AND SEE TO WHAT FAIR COUNTRY WE ARE BOUND."

HANLEY:
ALLBUT AND DANIEL.
—
1861.



THE RED LINE ON THE MAP SHEWS THE ROUTE.

[For Private Circulation.]

TO

EDWIN ALLBUT,

IN MEMORY OF AN OLD FRIENDSHIP AND OF

MANY PLEASANT RAMBLES,

BUT MORE PARTICULARLY IN COMMEMORATION

OF THE TOUR HEREIN DESCRIBED,

THE PLEASURE OF WHICH WAS SO MUCH ENHANCED

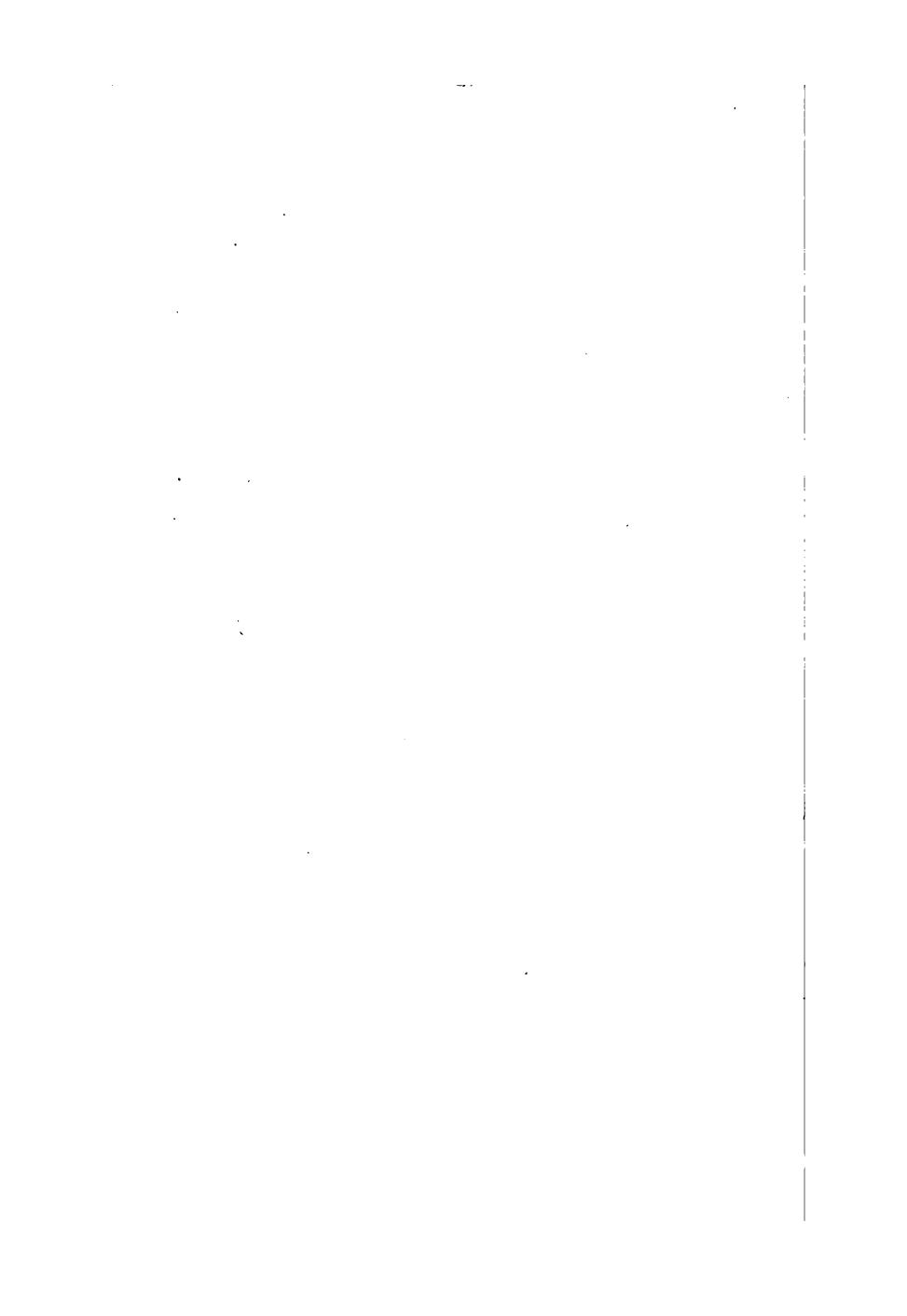
BY HIS COMPANIONSHIP,

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED, BY

THE AUTHOR.

•



PREFACE.

IN the autumn of 1859, the author in company with his old friend MR. ALLBUT, and MR. ALFORD, (a medical gentleman of the Metropolis, whose acquaintance he had then first the pleasure of making,) undertook a Tour in Norway, in search of recreation chiefly, and also with a view to such information about the country as a short ramble might enable them to collect.

This, which would formerly have been considered an extraordinary adventure, is now a comparatively common event. The novelty is disappearing as the risk and inconveniences diminish, and Norway is likely to become almost as well known to English tourists of the more

adventurous class, as Italy, Switzerland, or the Rhine. Difficulties will still be experienced by the luxurious traveller ; but the sublimity of the scenery, the primitive manners of the inhabitants, and their historical connection with ourselves, invest the country with an interest which will draw Englishmen to its shores in increasing numbers.

The object of the author is not to enter into historical disquisitions and scientific researches, nor to offer his little work as a substitute for the more elaborate works which have recently been published ; but simply to convey his impressions of the country, of its scenery and inhabitants, by describing what fell under his own observation during the time of his visit, which, although short, was pretty fully employed.

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A TOUR IN NORWAY.

CHAPTER I.

OUTWARD BOUND.—SUNDAY AT SEA.—NORWAY :
ITS GEOGRAPHY.—FJORDS AND FJELDS.—
ANCIENT HISTORY.—FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE
COAST.—LANDING.

It was on a foggy August morning, which gradually passed into a lovely day, that I and my two companions found ourselves, with a large company of passengers, gliding down the Humber in the fine screw steamer, "Scandinavian," on our way to Norway. The previous evening had been showery and unpromising, and probably this prepared us all the more to enjoy the pleasant sail on the river, and the prospect of an agreeable voyage across the German Ocean. On passing Spurn Head, a fine southerly breeze sprang up, and, under the combined influence of steam, wind, and tide, we pursued a course from which we never deviated till we approached the Scandinavian waters, at the rate of $11\frac{1}{2}$ knots an hour. The sea, on this day, at least, was as smooth as glass, and the effect of the receding shore till out of sight of land, then of the sunlight dancing on

the water, gleaming like frosted silver upon a dark ground, and subsequently, of the brilliant moon sparkling with a more subdued, but perhaps more enchanting light, occupied us pleasantly enough to keep us on deck till a late hour of the night. No doubt a long voyage is monotonous and tiresome enough, especially to those who have no useful employment to fall back upon, but for a few days the variety is sufficient to stave off the demon of *ennui*. The sea itself is at all times an object of interest; while the movements of the sailors, the passing of distant vessels, speculations as to the progress of the ship, the recurring meetings for meals in the saloon, and the strolls for conversation on deck in such fine weather as we were favoured with, render a short voyage not only endurable but agreeable, without any special or private occupation to engage our attention.

Our second day at sea was Sunday, and not wishing to lay aside our religious habits on leaving our own country, we ventured to suggest to the captain the propriety of holding divine service on board. Captain Fairburn having not only willingly but gladly consented, John, the good-tempered steward, or as he was commonly termed, "the doctor," immediately affixed a paper to the mainmast, intimating that service would be held in the saloon at eleven o'clock, and a quarter of an hour before that time commenced ringing the ship's bell in good style, as a hint to the congregation to assemble. Nearly the whole of the passengers, and as many of the crew as could be spared, united with us in worship; and, without describing our proceedings more particularly,

I may say that in thus publicly acknowledging our dependence upon, and seeking the protection of, Divine Providence, we had the satisfaction of having discharged a religious duty, and set an example which would have a beneficial influence.

The day continued fine till late in the evening, when heavy rain and a dreary night set in ; and as we were now approaching the dangerous Norwegian coast, and the darkness of the night compelled us to stand off the land for a few hours, I may take the opportunity of answering by anticipation a question which will probably be asked as to our motives for selecting Norway, in preference to other and more frequented countries, as the scene of our peregrinations.

In answer to this question, it might be sufficient to say, that as there are many interesting countries, and only one can be visited at a time, one is entitled to select which he pleases, without assigning any more particular reason ; but it is quite unnecessary, in this case, to shirk the question by asserting one's dignity and independence, as many substantial reasons may be assigned for placing Norway in a high position among the objects of interest to a tourist—the most important of which are its physical features, and its historical relations. A glance at each may not be useless or uninteresting.

Norway, as its name imports, is the most northern country of Europe, and is called by the natives Norge, or Norrike, which signifies northern kingdom, or kingdom of the Normans, or Northmen. It extends from the Naes, or Cape of Lindesnaes, in the south, in latitude 58 deg., to the North Cape, the most northerly point in

Europe, in lat. 71 deg. north, and from 5 to 28 deg. of longitude east of Greenwich. Its greatest length is about 1,100 miles, and its greatest breadth about 240 ; but a glance at the map, which will convey a much better idea of its form and position than any description, will show that it varies much in breadth ; so much so, that in 67 deg. or 68 deg. north lat. the distance from the shores of the inlets to the Swedish frontier is not more than 20 miles. Its total area is estimated at 120,000 to 130,000 square miles, which is considerably greater than that of the British Islands. But although the surface of Norway is some thousands of square miles larger than that of England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland together, the population differs exceedingly in the opposite direction ; the number of inhabitants being, at the census of 1855, only about a million and a half, while that of Great Britain and its adjacent isles, in 1851, was nearly 27 millions. The difference in density is therefore very great ; for while we have in England 233 persons to a square mile, in Norway the average is only about 10 or 12 persons in the same space.

From the comparatively small proportion of inhabitants, it might be supposed that the means of subsistence would be larger than in England ; but not so. So small a portion of the country is capable of cultivation, and so inconsiderable is its commercial and manufacturing development, that the amount of wealth, and the condition of the people generally, is much below that of the working classes in England, as I may have occasion to observe when we form their acquaintance.

With regard to the position and boundaries of the country, it is necessary to keep in mind that Norway forms part of the great Scandinavian peninsula, which constitutes the north-west corner of Europe, and is separated from the rest of the continent by the Baltic Sea. This peninsula is occupied chiefly by Norway and Sweden, which now form one kingdom, inclosed by the common boundary of the sea, under the same monarch, but each speaking its own language, governed by its own laws, and retaining its own ancient constitution. This peninsula is bounded on the east by Russia and the Baltic, more particularly that branch of the Baltic called the Gulf of Bothnia; on the south, by the Cattegat and its continuation, the Skaggerak, that wide entrance to the Baltic which connects it with the North Sea; on the west, by the North Sea, or rather, by the Atlantic Ocean, for, in reality, there is no land between Norway and America, except the Shetland Isles and the island of Iceland; and on the north, by the Arctic Ocean, which extends across the North Pole to the north-western shores of America. The climate of this peninsula must therefore be considered (so far as latitude, at least, is concerned) as much more severe than that of England; for while the most southerly portion is north of the mainland of Scotland, its northern regions extend across the Arctic circle, far into the frigid zone. In reality, however, the climate is much milder than might be supposed, as the temperature is considerably modified by its proximity to the sea, and by the gulf stream from the tropics, which, still retaining some portion of its warmth, passes along its western shores.

In this peninsula, Norway and Sweden lie side by side, like twin brothers, separated physically by a chain of mountains, but really and politically by a line of demarcation, drawn with an accuracy which is unparalleled in the geography of the world. The length of this line is 1,196 miles, and it is carried not only through the cultivated and inhabited portions of the peninsula, but even through the most dreary and almost inaccessible wildernesses, with mathematical exactness. At intervals of 3 or 4 miles, stations, called march stones, are erected ; on which, the distances are carefully marked, and on the top stone of which, the name of the king of Denmark is engraved on the Norwegian side, and that of the king of Sweden on the Swedish side. Wherever there is wood between the march stones, it is cut through to the breadth of about 32 English feet, so that one of these stones may be seen from the other. In the church of every parish which touches the boundary-line, is deposited a full account of the proceedings of the commissioners and of the boundary, so far as the parish or *praestigelt* is concerned.

So much for the position of the country in relation to the rest of Europe ; but what, it may be asked, are the features which distinguish it from others, and render it an object of attraction ? There are two peculiarities in the physical geography of Norway which distinguish it, not only from Sweden, but from every other country in the world, and which form the distinguished charm of its scenery, viz : its Fjords and Fjelds, or, in plain English, the mountain chains, which cover a large portion of its surface, and the gulfs or

arms of the sea, which penetrate so deeply into the interior of the country. True, other countries have their mountains, and most countries which border on the sea have their coasts indented by gulfs, bays, or other openings upon a larger or smaller scale; but in Norway these are marked features, and upon a scale vastly larger, in proportion to its magnitude, than in any other country; insomuch, that if you were to speak of the land of mountains and gulfs, no one acquainted with its geography would suppose for a moment that you meant any other country than Norway.

The great range of mountains, which, with its various branches, nearly covers the entire country, commences at Lindesnaes, the South Cape of Norway, and extends to the North Cape; and to such an extent does it spread itself out in every direction, that more than three-fourths of the entire country are said to be upwards of 2,000 feet above the level of the sea, and, with few exceptions, entirely incapable of cultivation. Of the remaining fourth, one-half is above 800 feet, and perhaps there is not one part out of thirty which is less than 300 feet above the sea level.

These ranges are called by different local names, which it is unnecessary here to specify; but the loftiest portion, and that which contains the finest and boldest scenery, consists of three principal parts—the Hardanger Fjeld on the south; the Fille Fjeld, which we crossed on the way from Christiania to Bergen, in the middle; and the Dovre Fjeld, which we crossed on our return from Molde to Christiania, on the north.

In passing from one side of the country to the other, it is of course necessary to cross these mountains, and this circumstance constitutes at once the difficulty, the romance, and the charm of the journey. The main roads are chiefly two—that which connects the capital with the city of Bergen, and traverses the plateau of the Fille Fjeld, at an elevation of between 3,000 and 4,000 feet; and that which leads to Molde, or Drontheim, traversing the plateau of the Dovre Fjeld, at an elevation of upwards of 4,500 feet above the sea level, and passing near the foot of Sneehaetten, a mountain the summit of which is nearly 8,000 feet above the level of the sea. These roads, traversing mountain ranges of such magnitude, with their lateral branches, defiles, and valleys, conduct the traveller through the grandest scenes of Nature; and although somewhat difficult and laborious from their steepness, keep him, if possessed of any taste for the sublime or the beautiful, in a constant state of pleasurable excitement.

The other principal physical feature to which I wished to direct attention is the Fjords, or arms of the sea, penetrating into the interior of the country amongst the mountain masses, and with them producing the most wonderful variety of scenes, at once stupendous and delightful.

Every one who has paid any attention to a map of Norway must have observed the peculiarly jagged appearance of the western and southern coast, full of inequalities and indentations, some of them comparatively slight, but many of them forming deep gulfs and bays extending far into the interior. Where there are mountain ranges,

there are necessarily valleys of corresponding magnitude. In the interior, the deepest of these valleys, if cut off from communication with the sea, form lakes, by the operation of the hydrostatic law, while those which are nearer the ocean, and communicate with it, constitute, for the same reason, the Fjords in question; and these, passing from the stupendous mountain ranges of the interior into the deep sea of the Norwegian coast, are of corresponding depth and grandeur. Of these the Christiania Fjord is about 70 miles in length, and remarkably picturesque and beautiful; the Hardanger Fjord is still larger, and lies amidst the most majestic scenery of the west coast, surrounded by mountains and glaciers, and abounding in waterfalls; while the Sogne Fjord penetrates the land to the depth of about 150 miles, and, overshadowed as it is by a mountain wall which often approaches or perhaps exceeds the height of 3,000 feet, has an aspect of peculiar and sombre grandeur. Of the first and the last of these Fjords I can speak from personal observation. With the Hardanger I am only acquainted by the descriptions of others.

The second reason I hinted at for the selection of Norway for a visit, was its historical associations, more particularly with our own country. I will not undertake to assert that this motive had very great weight with us at the moment of deciding upon our course; but I will say, that if it was not the real or principal reason which influenced our determination, it is a very excellent reason for directing our course to that country.

I imagine, however, that I hear some one, whose notions of the Danes, by which name all the

Scandinavian tribes are designated by our historians, are drawn from the pages of Hume, and from the records of the ravages of the sea-rovers in the time of Alfred the Great, say, Why occupy ourselves with these robbers and cut-throats, and why entrust our precious persons to hordes of pirates, or at least to the descendants of such persons, who, from the little communication they have with the rest of the world, are probably very little better than their ancestors? This feeling may probably be increased by the knowledge we have that the historical connection between them and ourselves is rather humiliating to our pride than otherwise, inasmuch as these northern wanderers seldom visited our shores but as conquerors. Looking a little further, however, we shall be reassured by discovering that we belong to a conquering race, whether German or Scandinavian, and that the energy, perseverance, and skill, which have enabled us to triumph in so many enterprises in every part of the world, are derived not only from the Saxons, who supplanted the ancient Britons, but also from the Vikings of Norway and Denmark, who infested the seas, and made settlements upon the shores of our country in the time of the Saxon kings, and from their descendants, who, having first conquered one of the most fertile provinces of France, afterwards, as Normans, descended upon the southern coast of our island, amalgamated themselves with the inhabitants of the country, and established a dynasty, which, connecting itself with the Saxon royal family of England, exists to the present day. Whatever may be thought of the deeds of some of their historical

personages, we cannot but respect the gallantry which, fostered amid the rude influences of the north, was destined, as Lord Dufferin justly observes, "to give an imperial dynasty to Russia, a nobility to England, and conquerors to every seaboard of Europe."

The history of Norway, especially in its relations to our own country, would form a very interesting subject of inquiry, and afford a great deal of instruction, but it would lead us too far away from my main object, which is to give such an account of the country as a brief personal narrative of a tour through a considerable portion of it may enable me to do. I am not one of those who think that the character of a people, their institutions and manners, or the physical appearance of the country, can be fully ascertained in a hasty journey of three or four weeks ; but it must be admitted, that knowing, as we did, something of the peculiarities of the country before we went there, personal and actual observation would both extend and correct our previous ideas, and that the mere circumstance of having our attention fixed upon it with a view to our own enjoyment, would impress both facts and scenes upon our minds with a distinctness, vividness, and persistency, which could be obtained in no other way.

At the approach of daylight, then, our captain ventured again to approach the land, and accordingly, at seven on the Monday morning, we heard the anchor go down in the harbour of Christiansand, and peeping through the little apology for a window in our cabin, caught the first glimpse of the Norwegian coast. There it lay, or, to

speak more correctly, there it stood, frowning, bleak, brown, barren, and bold, which, although this may seem to be an alliteration, describes the scene as correctly as I know how it should be described. And yet there was nothing at all forbidding in its appearance, but the contrary, for the fine bay in which our vessel was reposing is of a very picturesque character, surrounded by crags and protected by islands of the most romantic form, while the town itself appears to lie in a little sandy plain, flanked on both sides by lofty hills, and watered by a beautiful river, which here finds its outlet in the deep green waters of the bay. But the rain descending in torrents, we remain under cover, and hoping to have the opportunity of visiting it on our return, at nine weigh anchor, and stand out by the east channel amongst the rocks and islands to which I have referred. During the whole of this day we sailed along the south coast at a distance of about four miles, and thus had an excellent opportunity of observing its rugged margin, upon which the white surf was perpetually beating.

Later in the day the sea increased considerably, and a strong current setting against us from the Baltic, although the log showed a speed of upwards of nine knots an hour, our progress over the ground was not more than six or seven. In the meantime, the state of the weather very considerably reduced our dinner party, the motion of the vessel apparently affecting the gastric functions of a majority of the passengers. About ten at night we entered the Christiania Fjord, and, although we amused ourselves with watching the lights on shore, we regretted the absence

of the sun, and the consequent loss of the fine scenery of this beautiful Fjord.

The next morning, at five, we awoke in the harbour of Christiania, the capital of Norway, and, having hurried on shore, had our luggage passed on the quay, and, without taking time to look about us, went off to the railway station, where we found all our wants supplied, both provisions and carriages being ready, and an intelligent, educated, and active Norwegian waiting to conduct us through the country. All these arrangements had been made for us through the kindness of friends, who had been apprised of our arrival; and, having provided ourselves with a stock of Norwegian money, without which none of our plans could have been carried out, we left the capital by railway at half-past seven.



CHAPTER II.

NORWEGIAN TRUNK RAILWAY.—EIDSVOLD.—THE
MJOSEN LAKE.—GJOVIK.—MODE OF TRAVEL-
LING.—MUSTAD.—A SUPPER AND A BED.—
SKOIEN.—SPECIMEN OF NORSK ARISTOCRACY.
—THE FIRST CLIMB.

The easiest way of penetrating the interior of the country, to a certain extent, is by the railway and the Mjosen Lake. The Norwegian Trunk Railway, as it is called, the only railway in Norway, connects the capital with the lake, and although only six Norwegian, or forty-two English miles in length, is an important agent in the development of its commercial prosperity. By means of this undertaking and the steamers on the lake, the most populous and productive part of the country is brought into immediate connection with the capital and with the highway of nations, and being well managed, with moderate fares, it has not only proved a fair investment of capital, but has considerably increased the social and material advantages of the inhabitants ; and I may add that, although chiefly constructed by Norwegian industry, it is the product of English skill, for the late Robt. Stephenson was the engineer, and furnished the locomotives ; Mr. George Bidder was the superintendent of the works : and Messrs. Peto, Ricardo, and Brassey, were the contractors,

names all of which are well known in connection with the great railway system of this country, and of Europe at large.

After leaving Christiania we were much struck with the peculiarities of the line, and the difficult and costly works required by the nature of the country. We see this in the heavy gradients, especially near Christiania, where the ascent is 1 in 40; in the hills of solid granite and slate rocks, through which there are extensive cuttings; and in the numerous rivers and streams which traverse the valleys, and which are crossed by timber viaducts, perhaps the most extraordinary ever used for railway purposes, and which, although of immense strength, have an extremely light and elegant appearance. The line passes through a picturesque and fertile country, and the latter part of it, approaching Eidsvold, is actually cut through dense forests of pines, the tall and taper red stems of which, reflecting the light, impart a peculiarly soft and warm tint to the atmosphere, which is exceedingly agreeable.

Eidsvold, at which place we arrived about eleven o'clock, is at once the terminus of the railway and the place of embarkation on the lake, in addition to which it is of some historical and national importance, inasmuch as here, in the eventful year 1814, that constitution was formed by the representatives of the nation, which secured its rights and liberties.

If space allowed, or it were my purpose to give the history of Norway, it would be highly interesting to describe the steps by which this constitution was established, and the struggles which terminated in the transfer of the country from Denmark

to Sweden—a measure accomplished against the will of its inhabitants, but which has really tended to the promotion of their freedom and social welfare. But we must leave this seductive topic, and hasten to embark on board the pretty little steamer which is awaiting our arrival at the pier, and commence our voyage still further into the interior.

The Mjosen is a noble sheet of water, about 70 English miles in length, and although narrow for a considerable distance, it expands towards the centre to a width of nearly eight miles. At Minde, which is the real entrance to the lake, the scenery is very fine, the hanging woods seeming to be suspended over the sparkling waters, and the hills sloping off gracefully in all directions. As we advance, the view becomes more imposing; but nowhere on this lake have we the bold and majestic scenery for which Norway is remarkable. It has rather the air of a fine, cultivated country, for it is indeed the most cultivated part of Norway, the shores being studded with farms and villages, to which an appearance of grandeur is imparted by the fine expanse of water over which we are sailing. We had a large number of passengers on board, most of them taken from Eidsvold, but many picked up at the various stations at which we called; and I could not help observing, now that, for the first time, I had the opportunity of seeing a considerable number of Norwegians together, the ease and freedom of their intercourse with each other, which was marked, at the same time, by a kindly and by a respectful tone and manner. I may also add, that in sitting down at table with a very large

party, in the gay and airy saloon on the deck of the vessel, we found a very capital dinner, cooked and served well, although totally different from our own style, and including some fine specimens of the large red trout which abounds in the lake. After calling at Vang, at the head of a beautiful inlet, passing the ruins of an ancient cathedral at Storhammer,* and nearly circumnavigating the island of Helgö, which lies in the centre of the lake, we landed at Gjovik, a station on the west side, and prepared to commence the more important part of our journey, and that in which we were thrown more entirely on our own resources.

It will be proper here to describe our mode of travelling in the interior, which was that commonly adopted in the country, and, therefore, as may be supposed, best adapted to its peculiarities. From the steepness of the roads in most parts of this land of mountains, the ordinary methods of conveyance are inapplicable, and the safest is the carriole, a light, low carriage, without springs, consisting simply of a seat for one person, placed upon long, flexible ash shafts, and which, when drawn by the sure-footed and excellent Norwegian ponies, may be employed in every part of Norway, where there are roads at all, however steep, rough, or apparently dangerous. We had hired, or rather bought, with the liberty of returning them, four carriages, with capital harness, from Mr. Bennett, of Christiania, a gentleman known to most Englishmen who visit the country; and what we had now to do was to hire horses, at this and all other stations at which we might arrive, after the manner of driving your own carriage with post horses.

* Founded by Pope Adrian IV., an Englishman, in the 12th century.

This being the only method of travelling available, it becomes important to know whether a constant supply of horses can be depended on, more especially as there are no hotels in the country, except in a few of the principal towns. This desideratum is supplied by the Government, which, on the great post roads, arranges with the farmers at given distances, longer or shorter, according to the nature of the road, to supply travellers with horses at a very short notice, fixes the amount of remuneration to be paid by the traveller, and pays an annual sum out of the public funds, to assist them in keeping up a stock. This arrangement being made, it is quite compulsory on the farmer to find the horses; and any refusal or delay may be reported in the *dag bog*, a book kept for the purpose, which is periodically inspected by the Government officials. This is a great public convenience, and no hardship to the farmer, who is paid for his trouble, and generally, I believe, finds it to answer his purpose pretty well. It is also a very pleasant mode of travelling.

Arrived, then, at Gjøvik, our first care was to order horses; and as it had begun to rain heavily, and horses were not immediately forthcoming, we took shelter in a large shop, or store, of a wholesale and highly miscellaneous character, and of a magnitude apparently quite disproportionate to the population of the district. Here we bought umbrellas, and, I believe, might have bought almost any article of food or dress, or domestic implement, which would be likely to be required. At half-past six, our horses having arrived, we mounted our carriages for the first

time, and driving through a fine country, arrived at Mustad, our first resting-place in Norway, at eight o'clock.

The country here is varied and beautiful—pine forests, streams rushing through deep ravines, hills and corn-fields, diversifying the scene. The harvest was going on as rapidly as the showery weather, so common here, would allow, and we observed for the first time the Norwegian practice of suspending the sheaves of barley upon poles, upright, like hop-poles, or horizontally fixed upon upright supports; no doubt, to keep them off the damp earth. But one of the most striking features of the country to us was the universal and exclusive employment of timber in building. Houses, barns, churches, bridges, are built of wood, and in such quantities—especially in the case of the peculiarly-formed bridges—as to indicate its great plentifulness in this thinly-peopled country.

Mustad is a good station, well built of the usual material, consisting of a cluster of timber erections, with large rooms; and the occupants seem to be very substantial people. The provisions, however, consisted chiefly of rye-bread and dark Norwegian cheese, to neither of which our sophisticated palates had, as yet, adapted themselves, and therefore, as in other cases of emergency, we fell back on a box of edibles which my friends had provided. We slept in spacious rooms, each bed covered by a sheet and an eider-down quilt. The bed and coverings are very warm, but, generally, too short for comfort, and the eider-down has a decided tendency to form itself into a sort of balloon, covering the stomach, and

leaving the lower extremities exposed to the cold air. This evil, however, I soon learned to remedy, by covering the whole with my travelling-rug, and tucking it in, so that the bag of eider-down was kept in the form and position for which it was intended.

The next morning found us on an excellent road by the side of the Rands Fjord, a beautiful lake, which winds for about 50 miles amongst the mountains, and then, by means of the river Drammen, empties itself into the Christiania Fjord. Leaving the Rands Fjord, we follow the banks of the Etnedals-elv, a beautiful river at the base of the lofty mountains which form the eastern buttress of the great range, and about mid-day arrive at Skoien, a station finely situated in the valley of the Dokke. Here, having to wait a considerable time for horses, our guide and I walked to a neighbouring farm of a superior character, which was formerly the station, owned and occupied by a fine specimen of the leading men of old Norway, whose acquaintance I was very glad to make. His name was that of the station where his family had no doubt resided for centuries—Skoien of Skoien, or as would be said in Scotland, "Skoien of that ilk." These small landed proprietors, or bonders, as they are termed, who have descended from the old vikings, sea-rovers, and aristocracy of the heroic period of Norwegian history, and are the cousins of our Norman barons, have always formed the chief strength of the State, both in the field and in the National Assembly. They, with their families and servants, constituted the army; without their concurrence, the king was utterly powerless;

the administration of justice, the disposition of the national taxes, and the general management of public business, was in their hands; and I have little doubt, with a noble writer of the day, that it is "this state of things, and the Norse invasion which implanted them, and not the Witenagemote of the Latinized Saxons, to which we are indebted for the existence of the free parliaments which are the boast of Englishmen. And thus, while, over the rest of Europe, despotism rose up rank, amid the savage scenery of its Scandinavian nursery, that great race was maturing, whose genial heartiness was destined to invigorate the sickly civilization of the Saxon with inexhaustible energy, and preserve in the world, even to this 19th century, one glorious example of a free European people."—*Lord Dufferin*.

With Skoien I had the pleasure of conversing for an hour or two, as well as it was possible to do, through an interpreter, and after walking through his fields by the banks of the Dokke, had an offer of the hospitality of his house so hearty, that I could not refuse to accept of it. The scenery is very fine and the valley seems fertile, but even here the barley and other cereals are grown in patches only, with large intervals of waste; but there are many cattle, and pigs with long, curly tails—lively animals, apparently not over-fed.

Horses being at length procured, we started along the valley of the Etne to Tomlevold and Brufladt, the scenery becoming increasingly bold and romantic; and, after our drive of twenty-one miles from Skoien, were quite prepared for the dinner set before us, which, however proved

a very indifferent one, and in consequence of some dispute about the horses, was served with a very ill grace. It consisted of a sort of stew, the basis of which might have been the skin instead of the flesh of the reindeer. Here, after examining a very interesting specimen of a wooden Lutheran church, under repair, with a very grotesque interior, we commenced the ascent of the first mountain of any considerable elevation that we had to climb, and, for about four miles, had to plod our weary way on foot, the ponies being unable, of course, to draw more than the light carriages up the steep acclivity. The road commanded fine views of the noble valley and mountains we left behind us, but we were, for a considerable time during the ascent, enveloped in fog. On reaching the summit, however, we were amply repaid for the labour by the magnificent scene before us. From this elevation, of more than 4,000 feet, we looked down upon the Strande Fjord, a noble lake, (itself nearly 1,200 feet above the level of the sea,) which lay in the bosom of the mountains, basking in the evening sun, and in the distance were the Hurungerne Mountains, some of the summits of which offered us the first view we had of eternal snow. After contemplating for a short time this magnificent landscape, which was perfectly indescribable, and the image of which will never be erased from our minds, we commenced the descent into the valley of the Beina, by a road so steep that even Norwegian ponies, in many places, could hardly keep their legs. The same romantic scenery follows us to Frydenlund, where we rested for the night, and were glad to seek repose after our glorious day's drive of sixty-five miles.

CHAPTER III.

THE STRANDE FJORD.—OILÖE.—LILLE MÖSEN.—
ASCENT OF THE FILLE FJELD.—NYSTUEN.—
A NORSK LANDLADY.—MOUNTAINEERING.—
REINDEER MOSS.—A SÆTER.—MARISTUEN.

I had thought of describing our third day's journey in the interior in such a manner as to convey some idea of the country ; but I find it utterly impossible. A poet might, perhaps, kindle some such feelings as we experienced in going through the varied scenes which presented themselves on our way to the summit of the Fille Fjeld ; but, not being a poet, I shall not run the risk of failure by attempting it, but simply indicate the various points of our journey. We rose, then, at half-past five, and, after the customary cup of coffee, started for Lillestrand, along the banks of the Strande Fjord, and thence to Olken Slidre, amidst a scene of enchantment. At Olken, however, we found that the scenery was not the only delightful circumstance ; for here, although the common food of the people is oatmeal, prepared in a way that is very common in Scotland, and bearing a name of similar origin, I find a special remark in my note book, that " here we dined excellently on fish, reindeer venison, and capital claret ;" and this observation need not excite surprise, when it is considered how important

good living becomes to a hungry tourist in a hungry country like Norway.

After dinner we set out for Oiløe, first along the banks of a fine river, and then up the steep side of a mountain, the summit of which is 4,230 feet high. "The scenery here," as John Murray justly observes, "is of wondrous grandeur, and it requires good nerve to look upon the dark waters of the lake beneath, as the road, in some places, appears to overhang it. It would be a fearful way to traverse with any but Norwegian horses." "Wolves are common about here, but are rarely to be seen except in winter. In the winter of 1846, a peasant, when sledging on one of the Fjords, was attacked by a pack of six wolves. Fortunately, he had his axe with him, and his horse was a high-couraged animal, who fought gallantly with his fore feet, as the wolves sprang at his throat. Between them, three of the wolves were crippled, and the time occupied by the survivors in devouring them enabled the man and horse to reach a place of safety." The number of wild animals in Norway, although doubtless diminishing with the increase of population, is still very considerable. A reward is offered by government for their destruction, and an official return made of the number killed. I have not a recent return, but in the year 1855, according to the public statement,—which cannot contain the whole number destroyed,—205 bears, 235 wolves, 125 Lynxes, and 2,559 eagles, came to an untimely end, being executed according to the act of parliament. At Oiløe the houses seem suspended in the air, and command views of extraordinary beauty. Without waiting longer

here, however, than to change horses, we pushed on, along the side of the mountain, the lake glistening in the depth of the valley far below us, and our attention constantly occupied with the novelty of the scenery, the buildings, and the costume—all of which are highly picturesque. This indeed, is one of the steepest roads in Norway, the scenery of the most Alpine character, and the snow in sight all the way. Quame, which we reached about eight o'clock, is to be remarked, not only for its extremely romantic situation, but because here we commence the ascent of the Fille Fjeld, which, late as it was, we at once undertook, in the hope of reaching the excellent station of Nystuen, which we had fixed upon for our night quarters. Part of the journey was performed along the banks of the Lille Miösen, a dark lake, amid a scene of solemn grandeur, somewhat resembling that of Lynn Ogwen; in North Wales, but more vast and gloomy, which was rendered still more impressive by the closing of the evening, and the lengthening shadows of the huge mountains.

As we ascend, we have sufficient proof of the increasing elevation in the disappearance of successive forms of vegetation; and the only trees at last visible are some scrubby specimens of birch, so beautiful a tree in most parts of Norway, and a very low mountain willow, which seems to flourish at a very great altitude. On reaching the plateau of the Fille Fjeld, we had a solitary and elevated, but romantic drive by moonlight along a narrow road, bordered on the right by lofty mountains which cast their dark shadows over our path, and on the left by the precipitous

descent to the Utzevand. This Lake is the source of the Beine Elv, a river which, after traversing the country through which we have passed, eventually falls into the Christiania Fjord.

We reached the Nystuen station, a large and substantial farm, 3,170 feet above the level of the sea, about midnight; and having roused the inmates and obtained some refreshment, retired to rest, in one large room. We this day made a long and toilsome march of upwards of sixty miles, and had some stiff walking; but we also passed through scenery more bold and beautiful than had previously entered into our imagination.

It was six o'clock, and we had just left our eider-down couches; we were not dressed, but meditating dressing, when the door opened, and—how shall I tell it?—deliberately walked into the room our worthy hostess with some coffee! As soon as we had recovered from the slight trepidation caused by the apparition, we perceived that the lady was in the singular costume of the country, consisting of a white cap of a peculiar form, with a sort of wings behind, a dark cloth jacket buttoned up to the throat, with silver buttons, and a skirt of the same material reaching down to the ankles—without crinoline—fancy-coloured stockings and strong serviceable shoes, such as might have been worn by an English dairy-maid, only not so fashionable. We were not quite prepared for company in point of drapery, but not having been consulted in the matter, and the lady looking very innocent and amiable, we speedily reconciled ourselves to this evidence of the simplicity of Norwegian manners, and gratified her curiosity about various articles in our possession as well as we could.

After an excellent breakfast of trout from the lake, we commenced the ascent of the Nystuen Mountain, which appears to overhang the house, and is perhaps the culminating point of the Fille Fjeld. Looked at from below, this appeared easy enough to accomplish; but appearances, as we know, are often deceptive, and accordingly the undertaking proved rather more formidable than we expected. We soon reached the eminence we had been looking at from the station, although even this was higher than we anticipated; but when at the top, we found ourselves at a great distance from the real summit of the mountain, which was indicated by a pillar of loose stones, towards which we directed our march. In approaching it we had to wander over a perfect wilderness, untrampled, except by reindeer, bears, and wolves, with perhaps an occasional hunter, and in our course met with many large patches of snow, which in this elevated region never melts. At length we reached the summit, and climbing on the artificial structure, which somewhat resembles the pile on the summit of Snowdon, rested for half an hour, to survey the vast wilderness of mountains which lay scattered around us in every direction. The scene was very fine and perfectly novel, for in whatever direction we looked, and as far as we could see, there was nothing but mountains, sometimes in bold ranges, sometimes in lofty peaks, generally curvilinear in form, but with every variety of contour, and nearly all exhibiting patches of snow on their more sheltered sides. To the north especially, the scene is one of extraordinary sublimity, for above a table land of snow rises a chain of

Alpine heights, constituting the Jotun Fjelde or giant mountains of Scandinavia, in which the terrors of nature seem to be exhausted, in forming an inaccessible barrier to the approach of all living beings.

We commenced our return about one o'clock, calculating on reaching the station by half-past two, which my companions pretty nearly accomplished ; but separating from them on a sort of speculative ramble, I lost the direction, and by-and-by found myself descending a part I had not seen before, and which I can only compare to the roughest of sea-shores, rocky and shingly, elevated to an angle of forty-five degrees. The next level ground that I reached conducted to a most precipitous portion of the mountain, down which I found it impossible to descend. I then tried another movement, guided by reindeer tracks, which are here very numerous, the greater part of the mountain being covered with Iceland moss, which is their food, interspersed with shrubs bearing edible berries, red, black, and blue. At length, however, not to dwell on trivial misadventures and risks, I reached the station about an hour after my companions, very much fatigued, but without regretting the little experience of mountaineering I had acquired.

The sides of the Nystuen Pass are clothed with birch, but as it is nearly at the extreme elevation at which this tree grows, we do not find it on the higher ridges. This may be considered the watershed of this part of Norway, as the rivers flow both east and west in the neighbourhood of the station. On this desolate spot was formerly the chapel of St. Thomas, in which the clergy-

man from Vang used to perform divine service once a year, at midsummer; but the riotous conduct of the belligerent northmen from the neighbouring districts, led to the abolition of the service and the destruction of the chapel.

The reindeer moss (*cladonia rangiferina*,) is found in Great Britain, on moors, heaths, and in mountainous districts, but is no where so prevalent as in Norway, and especially in Lapland, where in some places the plant is so abundant, that for many miles, it is said to cover the country like snow. It attains its greatest luxuriance where the forests have been destroyed by fire; in which case the lichen is not destroyed, but flourishes in the soil—thus improved; and such districts become favourite winter pastures for the herds of reindeer. I tried a little of it as food, without being aware that Dr. Clarke had done the same thing, as a relief from the pangs of hunger; and my experience of the article exactly corresponded with his. "To our surprise," he says, "we found that we might eat of it with as much ease as of the heart of a fine lettuce. It tasted like wheat bran. But after swallowing it, there remained in the throat and upon the the palate a gentle heat or sense of burning, as if a small quantity of pepper had been mixed with the lichen. Cooling and juicy as it was to the palate, it nevertheless warmed the stomach when swallowed, and cannot fail of proving a gratifying article of food to man and beast during the dry winter of the frigid zone." Without this simple plant, neither Laplanders nor reindeer could exist; but so fond of it are the reindeer that however deep the snow of winter may be, they will find a way

to it with their noses, feet, or antlers. "Thus," remarks the great Swedish Naturalist, Linnæus, "things that are often deemed the most insignificant and contemptible by ignorant men, are by the good providence of God, made the means of the greatest blessing to his creatures."

After dinner and a rest, we left this hospitable station about five o'clock, only regretting that we could not compliment and thank our excellent hostess more freely in her own language.

On the road to the next station, Maristuen, we are accompanied by the river Leirdal, which takes its rise near Nystuen, and from a beautiful little stream speedily swells into a foaming torrent, often, at a great distance below our path, dashing along on its course to the Sogne Fjord and the ocean. The road here is still on the plateau of the Fille Fjeld, but has already commenced its rapid descent, and is occasionally exceedingly steep and exciting. About midway between the stations we passed a *sæter*, or mountain farm, the residences on which consisted simply of two huts, in which the dairy-maids live during the summer, and where they carry on the manufacture of butter and cheese. We entered both and found several young women, and one very little, old creature, who came pretty nearly up to my idea of a Lapland woman, the whole of whom were very civil, and seemed rather pleased than otherwise by the visit. Flocks of goats, sheep, and cows, the primitive looking cottages, and the girls in their curious costume, pursuing their rural labours in the midst of the wild mountain scenery, formed a picture of Arcadian life, which almost realized the dreams of the most enthusiastic poets of ancient or modern times.

About seven we reached Maristuen, a station kept by the sister of our Nystuen hostess, and like Nystuen, built by government for the accommodation of travellers on these dreary wastes; and here we remained for the night. After disposing of our carriages and luggage, I enjoyed a quiet walk down the road, and directed by the sound of rushing water, came to a ravine formed apparently by the splitting of the solid rock, through which rushed, tumbling over several declivities and blocks of stone, a beautiful, sparkling river; its banks, rugged as they are, covered with a rich carpet of variously and brilliantly coloured flowers and mosses, watered by the spray from the successive cascades. This little picture formed a beautiful contrast to the rugged and sublime mountains around, and to the immense fields of eternal snow which are seen in all directions; and a very pleasant half-hour was spent, reclining on a mossy stone, in this "nest of beauty in the lap of terror."



CHAPTER IV.

WILD SCENERY OF THE FILLE FJELD.—ROAD
ENGINEERING.—BORGUND.—CHURCHES OF
NORWAY.—HAPPY VALLEY.—LEIRDALSÖREN.
THE MOLTEBEER.—SHOPPING.—SOGNE FJORD.

Again, at half-past six we started for Haeg, along one of the wildest, sternest, and most terrific roads ever imagined; the river Leirdal tearing and foaming, hundreds of feet below us, and rugged precipices piercing the clouds on every side of us. To one acquainted with the legendary lore of the country, this district must be a region of romance, as it abounds in stories as wild as the scenery, the terrific grandeur of which, no doubt, suggested many of the tales by which it is illustrated. The numerous cascades and headlong leaps made by the river give a character of animation to the whole of this route, and afford the finest subjects for the artist; in addition to which, the picturesque dwellings of the peasantry, built of solid trees, and covered with planks, turf, and a luxuriant vegetation which renders them favourite browsing spots for the goats, form a succession of pictures of themselves.

On the next stage, between Haeg and Husum, the scenery is of the same character, but, if possible, still more marked in its characteristics, and the road terrifically steep and awfully grand.

In one place it is constructed in the midst of a vast chasm, formed by several mountains abutting against each other, descends from the summit along the face of the various steep declivities with the most singular convolutions, and presents at every instant scenes of the most impressive grandeur. The caution required in making the descent, however, even with Norwegian ponies, is such as to withdraw our attention a good deal from the scenery. However absorbing the wild and picturesque objects around us, our own position, on what might have been a gigantic spiral staircase made by the ancient Scandinavian deities, to facilitate their descent to the lower regions through these otherwise inaccessible mountains, was still more absorbing, as the slightest trip or accident to our horses would speedily have terminated our adventure. A little further on we came to Borgund, a small and pretty village, but chiefly remarkable for an ancient church of a most singular form, built of Norwegian pine, in a situation of great beauty, and said to be upwards of 800 years old.

The churches in Norway being almost invariably built of wood, it may readily be imagined that few of them are of any great antiquity. The same indeed may be said of the buildings generally. Any one going to Norway with the expectation of meeting with the remains of feudal castles and venerable cathedrals, will be much disappointed; although the case of Storhammer proves that the country is not absolutely destitute of such monuments. The geological formation of the peninsula, which includes none of those sandstones and limestones which are so easily worked

into architectural forms of structure and ornamentation, together with the great abundance of excellent and durable timber, will sufficiently account for this peculiarity. Indeed, the durability of the Norwegian pine is abundantly proved by the church of Borgund, as well as many others in different parts of the country, some of which carry us back to a period coëval with the old abbeys of our own country, and by their peculiar form and arrangements prove that they originated with the same race and in the same ideas of ecclesiastical requirements.

The churches of Norway are generally built in the form of a cross, and have a tower in the centre, terminating in a lofty spire ; while the dark colour of the timber, the lofty pitch of the roofs, the dark shingle or slaty stone with which they are covered, and the peculiar form of the spire, which is more like a Chinese pagoda than anything with which we are familiar, give them an appearance of massiveness and stability which one could hardly expect from the nature of the materials employed. They are also highly ornamented, with circular apses to the chancels, encircled crosses in the gables, dragons' heads and other objects carved in bold relief on the angles, just as in our old Gothic churches, and even (as in the case of Borgund church, which has led to these remarks) a cloistered gallery running entirely round the exterior of the building. This church is in good preservation, and the style of ornamentation gives it a very singular appearance. It has no ceiling, but above the altar there is a small space beneath the roof, in which the stuffed figure of a reindeer has been standing

from the most ancient times. I am sure that these Norwegian churches, in connection with those of the same age in our own and other countries, would form a highly interesting subject of inquiry to the antiquarian.

Tearing ourselves away from this interesting spot, we pursued our way to Midtlysne, through passes the finest and boldest that can be conceived, and with the most picturesque-looking waterfalls constantly in view. Far below in the dark abyss of the narrow glen, the Leirdal river rushes with thundering noise through its rocky bed. Enormous pieces of rock some of them as large as a house, which have tumbled down from the sides of the mountains, bearing witness to the sports of the giants of old in this dark glen ; and even at present the traveller might seem to be under their charm, where he sees himself hemmed in by rocky precipices towering on all sides, where no outlet is visible, until in his progress he suddenly sees the mountains recede, and a view of softer, less terrific scenery bursts upon him. Here the giants of old played their tricks on St. Olaf, when he was riding through the glen ; he suddenly found himself on all sides hemmed in by rocks, in a defile so narrow that he could not even turn his horse, when he commanded the rocks to give way on both sides. The impression of his horse's head and croup are still shown in the hard rock. The giants he turned into stone ; and to the present day a giant or jotul, turned into stone, may be seen on the brink of a precipice, from which a waterfall descends called the *Jutlefos*, or the giant's cascade.

From some cause which I do not remember, we found no horses ready, and indeed none nearer than a Norwegian mile, from which distance they had to be fetched by the people at the station. But although we had to wait here a couple of hours, we did not lose our time, as we had both refreshment and a very agreeable rest. At the station we partook of a local dish, called *spagaraad*, which seems to be simply dried mutton uncooked, and which, although my companions made wry faces at it, seemed to me very tasty and palatable, especially when seasoned with a certain Spartan sauce, the principal ingredients of which are hunger and fatigue.

This place is situated in a perfect inclosure of majestic and apparently inaccessible mountains, forming a valley probably three or four miles long, and about a mile in width to the foot of the mountains, which rise to the height of 5,000 feet on both sides. Through this valley, the river, which is here of considerable width, rushes over a bed of shingle, very much like an old sea-shore. In this sequestered spot, we took possession of a dilapidated boat as our resting-place, directly opposite to a beautiful waterfall, and felt much inclined to make an excursion into dreamland, lulled by the rippling of the waters and the tranquil beauty of the scene. In the midst of our pleasant reverie, however, we were still more pleasantly aroused by the sudden apparition of our ponies, which had been brought seven English miles, and which, having been led to the banks of the river, were driven across, partly wading and partly swimming, while the guides crossed in a boat. This incident imparted

a delightful animation to the picture; and I could not help thinking that the grotesque movements of both horses and men in the midst of a scene so charming, would have formed a subject for a painting, which some of our old masters would have been delighted to study.

From this place, a pleasant drive of an hour brought us to Leirdalsören, at the mouth of the river Leirdal, (which has accompanied us in our rapid descent from the plateau of the Fille Fjeld,) and at the head of this branch of the Sogne Fjord. Arriving here on the afternoon of Saturday, we determined to enjoy a rest after the arduous labours of the week, and to make the next day a Sabbath, in the Jewish as well as the Christian sense of the word, and accordingly settled down in excellent quarters at the inn, which forms a delightful contrast to the ordinary stations of the country. Here we had comfortable bed-rooms and excellent fare, and at dinner first tasted the *moltebeer*, or "cloudberry," as it is called in Scotland, where it is found in some parts of the Highlands. It is a wild plant, found only in mountainous and northern regions, and is particularly abundant in the northern parts of Norway and Sweden, and in Lapland, so much so as to be an article of commerce. It is somewhat like a small or wild strawberry, but lighter in colour, and when eaten with sugar and cream, forms a cooling and delicious dessert. Dr. E. Clarke, when in Sweden, ascribed his recovery from a dangerous illness to the plentiful supply of this fruit, which happened to be furnished him as a relish, but which produced the happiest and most unexpected results.

A clerical lecturer having called in question the productive capabilities of Norway in the vegetable line, one of my companions, jealous for the honour of the country, triumphantly made a list of the articles he found growing in the garden connected with this station; which in addition to a variety of common and useful culinary vegetables, included the convolvulus, the hyacinth, mignonette, marigolds, nasturtiums, rose trees, hollyhocks, and other flowering plants. In the short summer of this high latitude vegetation proceeds with singular rapidity, and any one who will take the trouble may secure a variety of both useful and ornamental productions.

Leirdalsören is a quiet little fishing-town, built of wood, and at first sight has rather a neat and clean appearance, but the dwellings do not improve on acquaintance. We entered several shops, and were much amused with the miscellaneous character of their contents. Silks, hosiery, bread, beer, drugs, knives, and mouse-traps, formed but a small portion of the assortment of articles exhibited for sale; and we found also that the dealers had acquired a notion, so common amongst foreigners, that no price is too high for an Englishman to pay for any article of which he may be in want. This, however, I ought in justice to say, is not a general characteristic of Norwegian tradesmen, but is found in a few cases, where the dealers have been corrupted by the reckless and extravagant habits of many English tourists. But although we found little to attract us in the village itself, the situation in which it is built is very romantic and beautiful.

The road from the last station is chiefly through a narrow and picturesque valley, the bottom of which is occupied by the Leirdals Elv, with its numerous salmon-traps and romantic wooden bridges. As we approach the mouth of the river, the valley widens and becomes more fertile, and in short, the lofty mountains by which it is flanked, diverging, inclose first the plain upon which the village is built, and then the waters of the noble Sogne Fjord, which flow from this point, a distance of not less than 120 miles, before they reach the North sea. In the evening we hired a boat, with a couple of boatmen, and enjoyed a row on the Fjord. The water near the entrance of the river is remarkably smooth, and so clear that for a considerable distance the pebbles at the bottom could be distinctly seen. Speedily, however, the depth was too great for this, and as the Fjord expanded and met the mountains on both sides, dipping almost perpendicularly from the height of 3,000 feet at once into the almost unfathomable depths below, the scene, aided by the waning light of evening, acquired a solemnity and grandeur which it would be vain in me to attempt to describe.

CHAPTER V.

A SUNDAY IN THE INTERIOR.—EDUCATION.—A
VOYAGE ON THE SOGNE FJORD.—BERGEN.—
NORWEGIAN POLITENESS.

The next day being Sunday, we naturally inquired for a Lutheran church, and found there was one at some distance, but from some cause no service was to be held that day. Walking out, however, we saw some young people moving towards a cottage at the extremity of the village, which on entering we found was a school-room, when we were joined by thirty or forty young people of both sexes, a few women more advanced in life, and a young man, apparently in a humble position, but of staid and decent appearance, who conducted a religious service in a very decorous and becoming manner. The service consisted of a hymn sung by the whole congregation, a liturgy, which appeared closely to resemble that of the Church of England, and a sermon read from a printed book. I was much struck with the attention paid by the young people, who were furnished with books, and followed the service, as far as we could judge from the expression of their faces, in a devout and intelligent manner. The young man who had the charge of this service was no doubt one of the teachers appointed to instruct the children of the village in secular knowledge.

on the week-days, and in the absence of the regular minister to conduct religious worship on the Sabbath.

In Norway, I may take this opportunity of saying, all the children learn to read and write. Education is compulsory, and an advanced education is the only passport to position, to public offices, or to distinction of any kind. The effect of this state of things is, a general look of intelligence among the people, more especially the young people. You scarcely see any of those faces, too common in this country, in which stupidity and vice seem contending for the mastery; and amongst the number of persons, both young and old, to whom my friends gave religious tracts in the Norwegian language, I do not think there was a case in which the recipients did not fall to the perusal with the apparent facility of educated persons. The consequence of this general diffusion of knowledge is, not only that education is held in high esteem by the people at large, but that there is a general quickness of apprehension, and sometimes a facility of rejoinder, which is not usually possessed by the rural population of other countries. Conversing upon this subject with our guide, who is an intelligent and educated Norwegian, and keenly alive to the credit of his fellow-countrymen, he gave an instance of this quickness which occurred during the discussions connected with the settlement of the constitution. The question under consideration in the Storting was the abolition of the aristocratic branch of the legislature; when one of the last and oldest of the nobility, appealing to the house, said:—"If the order of

nobility is abolished in my country, I will say to the mountains of Norway, *Farvel—farvel !*" upon which one of the peasant representatives instantly arose, and said, "And the mountains of Norway will echo, *Vel—vel !*"

The same evening we embarked in the steamer "Framnaes," with our carriages, for Bergen, a voyage of probably 200 English miles, and in some respects very interesting—interesting because it enabled us to traverse the whole length of the Sogne Fjord, and also because, in connection with the further voyage northward which we contemplated, it afforded us the opportunity of seeing a good deal of the west coast of Norway. The first of these objects was only a partial advantage, for a large portion of the voyage down the Fjord was necessarily performed in the night, and the weather was not particularly favourable. During the evening, however, we watched from the deck the mountain masses and lateral valleys which everywhere presented themselves, and found them not so much beautiful as solemn and gloomy in their grandeur. The summits of the mountains are seldom seen while in the Fjord, as the sides of the channel generally present an escarpment of great depth, descending almost perpendicularly into the water; but when we did get a view through an opening into the Fjelds which lie beyond, we obtained charming prospects of mountain rising above mountain, to the height of 6,000 feet, sometimes presenting the varied colours of the vegetation of the upper regions, sometimes the bare brown rock on which no living thing exists, and often the dazzling expanse of snow, reflecting the slanting rays of the evening sun.

About ten the next morning, we left the Sogne Fjord, and commenced our voyage amongst the islands and rocks of the west coast, which, in this part of it at least, looks remarkably bare, desolate, and inhospitable. There is little to be seen but brown, barren rocks, with the surf beating on them, and here and there a hamlet or fisherman's hut. But the islands are innumerable. Some of them are of considerable size, but generally they are very small, and many of them mere rocks, which afford no dwelling-place, except for the sea-gull and the cormorant, of which we saw immense flocks.

At four in the afternoon of Monday, we anchored in the harbour of Bergen, the principal town on the west coast of Norway, where we found more visible signs of commercial activity than we had met with since we left the port of Hull. This harbour is well protected from the various winds, by its situation at the bottom of a deep bay, and contained a considerable number of vessels, generally small. The town, extending in the form of an amphitheatre in front, with its cathedral, churches, public buildings, and busy quays, protected on each side by strong fortifications, and surrounded by lofty warehouses, and the villas of the merchants, scattered on the slopes of the mountains, presented an appearance of social prosperity which was pleasant to behold. The town, which is well situated for trade, was built, or rather restored, by King Olaf, in the eleventh century, or just about the time of the Norman invasion of England, and was for several centuries the capital of the kingdom. Even now, although Christiania, the present capital and the seat of

legislature, has outstripped its more ancient rival in point of population, the latter has still a larger proportion of trade, and, of course, vastly more interesting historical associations. We only spent one evening in Bergen, and, unfortunately, it rained the whole of the time we were there. We made the best possible use, however, of the few hours at our disposal, and I fancy saw nearly everything of interest which the town has to offer, externally at least. In fact, the interest of Bergen lies not so much in visible objects as in the memories of the past. The first foreign ships that entered the port were English ; and, what is still more remarkable, the first commercial treaty ever made by England with a foreign power, was made with the merchants and government of Bergen. There are many indications of antiquity in the town, but still more in the port, where the vessels employed in the fisheries, which have always been the chief trade of this coast, with their great breadth of beam, their elevation fore and aft, and their immense lug sails, carry us back to a very early period of their history ; for the Northmen are so prejudiced in all that concerns the build and rig of their vessels, that they will not permit the slightest innovation ; and, in all probability, the vessels we saw in the Fjord are fac-similes of those employed by Hakon Hakonson, in the very infancy of their navigation.

Bergen has an antiquated air, some streets being narrow and inconvenient, the houses almost entirely built of wood, with a cask of water at the door of each, for the purpose of extinguishing accidental fires, and, with this exception, presenting an appearance similar to that of the oldest

parts of our ancient seaports. The shops, indeed, differ materially from ours, particularly in the nature of their contents, which are not only more miscellaneous, but also include many articles seldom seen in ours; such as the silver ornaments worn by the people, in great variety, and especially the gilt crown worn by brides at the marriage ceremony. These are generally hung in glass cases near the shop doors, and we met with them in nearly every part of the town. The people, too, have the same old-fashioned look, especially the women of the humbler classes, in their quaint costume, consisting of woollen dresses, hanging straight down, and bodices curiously ornamented with embroidery, surmounted by a cap, to describe which I can think of no shorter word than papilionaceous, for they look as much as possible like an overgrown butterfly with outspread wings.

One trait of their character, which struck us here as in other parts of Norway, is the excessive and ceremonious politeness of the people in their intercourse with each other. However slight the acquaintance, or humble the rank of parties who meet in the street or elsewhere, off go the hats of both parties; and so, on entering a shop, you remove your hat, and remain uncovered till you take your departure.

The lions of Bergen are the Gallery of Art, and the Museum of Antiquities and Natural History. The former contains a few fine pictures by Gude, Tiedeman, and other native artists; a considerable number of views of Norwegian scenery, by Duntze, who resides in Bergen; and a still larger number far below mediocrity. The Museum must be of

great interest to a student, but we had no time to examine its treasures. The Cathedral School is in the neighbourhood of the Gallery, and its numerous rosy and merry specimens of the Scandinavian juvenile population, who were just turning out, after the labours of the day, afforded us a more lively pleasure than all the wonders of both Gallery and Museum. After making a few purchases in one of the quaint little shops, where we were served by two plump little Norwegian girls, who, with all their politeness, were evidently amused by our vain attempts to make ourselves understood, visiting the only hotel, and walking about as long as the weather permitted, we went on board the "Prinds Gustav," which was to convey us northward on the following morning.



CHAPTER VI.

THE WEST COAST.—THE EIDER DUCK.—VOLDEN.—
AALESUND. — A. MISTAKE. — MOLDE. — THE
ROMSDAL FJORD.

At half-past five on Tuesday morning I went on deck, and found the ship under weigh, and the ancient city of Bergen receding from the view. The morning was damp and cold ; but I walked the deck for two hours, watching the coast, which, although dreary and desolate, had a certain charm in the variety of outline. The shore appears to rise abruptly out of the water, often low, always rough, but occasionally backed by mountain masses, which seem like giants peeping over the heads of their humbler brethren into the dark waters. This continues till we pass the mouth of the Sogne Fjord, after which the scenery decidedly improves in grandeur as we proceed northward. The outline of the coast is broken and complicated in the extreme, while the picturesque-looking islands, one of which, called Alden, looks extremely like the rock of Gibraltar, form a constant attraction.

The sea was occasionally very rough, depending upon the circumstance of being inside or outside of the islands. In the former case, we were protected and in smooth water ; in the latter, we were exposed to the swell of the Atlantic, which,

on this coast, is felt very much. But even in smooth water the greatest care is required to avoid the sunken rocks and little islands, which are barely visible in all directions, although the depth of the water is unfathomable. Hence, the coast being dangerous and the night stormy, we anchored till the approach of daylight in the little harbour of Bryggen, after passing a rock which rises 1,200 feet perpendicularly out of the water, although within a short distance there are no soundings. On the next day, Wednesday, we had the same experience of the coast. At first, all was smooth, but by-and-by we got outside, where there is no protection from islands, and gradually the swell increased till it became terrific, the result of a previous gale which had raised the sea in the Atlantic, and for four or five hours we had the roughest voyage it was ever my lot to experience. This lasted till about nine a.m., when suddenly we found ourselves in smooth water, perfectly land-locked : such is the nature of this singular coast.

In addition to the gull and cormorant before-mentioned, these coasts form the habitation of a very interesting creature. I have already indicated the use of eider-down by the Norwegians in their beds and coverlets. This important article is the product of the eider duck (*somateria mollissima*), a member of a large branch of the duck family, which is distinguished for its powers of swimming and diving, and which inhabits the sea coasts rather than the fresh water lakes and rivers of the northern regions. This species is found abundantly in Davis' Straits and Baffin's Bay, in Spitzbergen, in Greenland and Iceland, in

Lapland, Norway, the Hebrides and the Orkneys; and its most remarkable feature is the large development of that exquisitely soft and elastic down, which is essential to the maintenance of animal heat in these icy regions. So important is this down considered in the above countries, that the natives incur immense labour and risk in collecting it from the steep cliffs on which the birds build their nests; and as it forms an elegant and useful present to the young ladies of Norway from their sturdy admirers, the comparative attractions of the former may generally be estimated by the quantity of this commodity they are able to produce, in preparation for the wedding day.

The eider down is termed *live* or *dead*, as it is taken from the living or dead bird; the former being considered of very superior quality. The live down is that which the duck strips from its own body to line the nest and protect the eggs, and is of such lightness and elasticity that while two or three pounds weight of it may be compressed into a ball which can be held in the hand, it will, on being liberated expand to such an extent as to fill a case large enough for the covering of a bed.

The method of collecting the down is somewhat peculiar. The first hatch of eggs, generally five or six, being laid, they are removed with the down, upon which another hatch is laid and supplied with down by the female. These being taken, the female can supply no more down, and the male bird plucks his breast; but *this* deposit is always left, for were it removed, the disconsolate birds would immediately forsake the nest

and return no more. To prevent such a catastrophe and the loss of what is considered a very valuable property, which descends from father to son through many generations like any other inheritance, every care is used to encourage the bird and protect its favourite haunts.

The chief enemy of the eider duck next to man, is the voracious sea-gull or black-backed gull (*Larus marinus*), which preys upon the eggs and the young before they leave the nest. After this period they can generally protect themselves by diving.

At half-past twelve, we reached the beautiful village of Volden, which is situated in a deep gulf, far away from the influence of the ocean, surrounded by lofty mountains, extensively wooded and cultivated.

Nothing can be more delightful than the situation of this place and the scenery by which it is surrounded; and it no doubt seemed all the more delightful to us, from the contrast it formed with the bleak, stormy, and inhospitable coast we had been traversing for the greater part of two days. The town, in which there is a large and curious but handsome church, with a lofty spire, a chancel of a semi-octagonal form, and transepts with a sort of triangular window heads, occupies a grassy slope, surrounded by what might be a park of immense extent, beautifully wooded, and consists of neat cottages of timber scattered about the sides of the mountain. The whole scene looked so tranquil and charming, that we were reluctant to leave it, and fixed our eyes upon it till the next promontory intercepted the view. Continuing our course, we arrived

about five o'clock at Aalesund, a small fishing-town, most picturesquely situated, and commanding magnificent views of the distant mountains.

Besides its beautiful situation, both the town and neighbourhood are rich in historical associations, and are the scene of many an old legend of the sea-kings of Norway. Here lived Rollo, or Rolf Ganger, as he is called in the Norwegian annals, the ancestor of William the Conqueror. Indeed, the whole coast we were now traversing is full of the same kind of interest, for from its Fjords issued, at various times, those hardy adventurers who colonized Iceland, discovered Greenland and America ages before the birth of Columbus, subjugated every island in the seas which surround Great Britain, from Shetland to the coast of Normandy, and, carrying their arms southward, carved out for their leaders principalities in Sicily and on the shores of the Adriatic.

Having come to an anchor in the inner harbour, which is perfectly sheltered from storms, whichever way the wind may blow, we immediately went ashore, and walked round the town, which appeared to be substantial and prosperous; the merchants here, as in most other towns on the coasts, being extensively engaged in the fish trade. The church is a very large wooden erection, built in a plain style, and contains an organ of considerable magnitude, with the key-board at one end, so that the organist can see the minister and congregation while engaged in his duties.

On leaving the church we paid a visit to the town hall, where, to our great surprise, we were very heartily welcomed by the two or three persons who happened to be present, and who

expressed much delight at our arrival. Any self-complacency in which we might have been inclined to indulge, in consequence of our reception was, however, somewhat rudely dispelled by the information that we had been mistaken for a party of strolling conjurers or jugglers, who had actually arrived in the same vessel, and were to give an exhibition of their powers that night; and I have no doubt we sank considerably in the estimation of these good people when it was discovered that instead of being mountebanks, we were simple tourists who had no intention of cheating them.

Here, in consequence of some information we received, we made a slight change in our arrangements, which considerably facilitated our progress; and, instead of continuing our voyage in the "Prinds Gustav," we transferred our carriages and baggage on board another steamer, the "Sønd Mael," in which we left Aalesund about eight in the evening, and after a rough passage in this miserable, rocking little vessel, arrived at Molde about midnight.

After three or four hours of such repose as might be had on a hard sofa in the cabin of a dirty steamer, I went on deck about half-past four. It was a wet morning, and but for the magnificent view, which the rain and the mist could not altogether obliterate, I would have remained under cover. But as the sun rose higher in the heavens, the mist, which hung over the opposite shore of the Fjord, gradually rose like a curtain, and disclosed one of the grandest Alpine scenes which it is possible to conceive. I use the word *Alpine* advisedly, as the mountains

differ in appearance from those of most other parts of Norway; and instead of rounded summits connected by flat ranges, which form the Fjelds of the country, we have granite peaks shooting into the sky, and, with the mountain masses from which they spring, presenting a contour of the most romantic character, the effect of which was much increased by the different distances, the varying lights, and the beautiful inland sea or lake across which I had the opportunity of viewing them.

Molde, near the quay of which we were now lying at anchor, is a town of 1,200 or 1,300 inhabitants, picturesquely situated on a small promontory near the entrance of the Romsdal Fjord; and, although we did not go ashore, we saw sufficient of it to be convinced that its environs command the most enchanting views both of land and water scenery. As the morning advanced, a number of passengers came on board, the only Englishmen besides ourselves being the Duke of Roxburgh, and his son, the Marquis of Bowmont, who had been fishing and pedestrianizing in the north, and were now returning home by way of Christiania and Hamburg. If I mistake not, it was the Duke who informed us that an Englishman, (a Captain Bromley,) had bought the top of a mountain for 80 specie dollars. About seven we re-commenced our voyage, and, after a most delicious sail across the Fjord and along its southern side, reached Veblungsnaasset about ten.

CHAPTER VII.

VEBLUNGSNAESSET.—ROMSDALEN.—PHILOSOPHICAL
NOTIONS OF THE PICTURESQUE.—WATERFALLS.
—ROMSDALS HORN.—ORMEN.—A MOUNTAIN
RAMBLE.

We had now commenced our retrograde journey, for Molde was our farthest point to the north-west, and we were determined to make the most of our time by exploring the Romsdal and the Guldbrandsdal, the two finest valleys in Norway, if not in Europe, and by crossing the Dovre Fjeld, the great mountain chain of Norway which separates these valleys from each other.

Veblungsnaesset, the place at which we had now arrived, is the port of the Romsdal, and contains an hotel of some magnitude for this remote region, and perhaps fifty small houses, all, of course, built of wood. The village itself is finely situated upon a slope of the mountain, close to the waters of the Fjord, and surrounded by mountains, the lower parts of which are verdant and beautiful, while their summits are covered and their hollows filled with eternal snow. Having made an excellent breakfast and improvement in our toilet, both of which were needed after our voyage, at noon we entered upon this very interesting portion of our route.

Romsdalen, as I have since learned, is a district about which there is a great deal of excitement in Norway itself. It is described in the loftiest terms, views taken in every part of it are given in their illustrated works, and all travellers are earnestly directed to visit it. I have also learned, what I can well understand after having traversed it from one end to the other, that however highly raised may be the expectations of visitors, they are never disappointed. It will readily be understood, therefore, how difficult, or rather impossible it would be for a prosaic person like myself to give any adequate description of its beauties. In fact, it may be said to comprise, in a large degree, the elements of beauty and grandeur which are found in the most celebrated valleys of the world. And the impression it makes appears, at first sight, the more remarkable, inasmuch as, from the narrowness of the valley and the elevation of the mountains by which it is inclosed, only a small portion of it can generally be seen at once. But perhaps this very circumstance adds to its interest, as the effect of travelling through it is something like that produced by the movement of a panoramic view, which constantly discloses unexpected beauties, and keeps the mind in a constant state of excitement by the novelty and grandeur of the pictures unceasingly presented. The steep mountains, with their summits buried in the clouds, presenting in the lower portions beautiful herbage and stately forests, and bare, brown rocks, or immense fields of snow; the stupendous waterfalls, which are everywhere seen dashing down the mountain sides; and the beautiful river Rauma rapidly

rushing along at your feet, the whole contorted into the most fantastic shapes, present to the eye a picture which can never be effaced from the mind.

It was the opinion of a celebrated writer of the seventeenth century, that the earth, as originally formed, was a perfect sphere, without mountains, or valleys, or any other inequalities of the surface, and, consequently, without rivers or seas, the waters contained in it being inclosed in a subterranean vault, which only burst forth at the deluge, when "the fountains of the great deep were broken up," and the present irregularities produced by this great convulsion of Nature. Respecting this theory we need only say that, looking at the matter merely with an eye to the picturesque, and setting aside the other and far greater advantages of the present state of things, we ought to be very thankful, either that the Almighty had no occasion to call this philosopher to his councils in the formation of the world, or, assuming the correctness of the theory, that such a catastrophe as Noah's deluge occurred to break up the dull and hideous uniformity which this mundane sphere must have presented to the eye of the unfortunate antediluvians. In such a world, change of scene, one of our greatest pleasures and best instruments of health, would have been impossible, for all scenes would have been alike; and the delightful recollections called up by the magic names of Snowdon, Windermere, Killarney, Ben Lomond, Switzerland, and Norway, could have had no existence.

Burnet, however, is not the only writer who looks upon inequalities of surface as deformities

and blurs in the fair face of creation ; for such were the ideas entertained in much more recent times, and so comparatively young is the passion for the grand and the beautiful in Nature, that a writer, in an edition of a work of reference of great authority published in the early years of the present century, describes Norway in these seductive and fascinating terms :—

“The vast mountains and rugged rocks that *deform* the face of this country, are productive of numberless inconveniences. They admit of little arable ground ; they render the country in some parts impassable, and everywhere difficult to travellers ; they afford shelter to wild beasts, which come from their lurking-holes and make terrible havoc among the flocks of cattle ; they expose the sheep and goats, as well as the peasants, to daily accidents of falling over precipices ; they occasion sudden torrents and falls of snow, which descend with incredible impetuosity, and often sweep away the labours of the husbandman ; and they are subject to dreadful disruptions, by which huge rocks are rent from their sides, and, hurling down, overwhelm the plains below with inevitable ruin. The peasants frequently build their houses on the edge of a steep precipice, to which they must climb by ladders at the hazard of their lives ; and when a person dies the corpse must be let down with ropes before it can be laid in the coffin. In winter, the mail is often drawn up the side of steep mountains. Even in the King's road travellers are exposed to the frequent risks of falling over those dreadful rocks, for they are obliged to pass over the narrow pathways without rails or rising on the sides, either shored up with

rotten posts, or suspended by iron bolts fastened in the mountains. In the narrow pass of Narve is a remarkable way of this kind, which, above six hundred years ago, the famous King Surre caused to be made for the passage of his cavalry; and even this would have been found impassable by any other horses than those of Norway, which are used to climb the rocks like goats. Another very difficult and dangerous road is that between Shogstadt and Vang-in-Volders, along the side of a steep mountain, in some places so narrow, that, if two travellers should meet in the night, they would find it impracticable either to pass each other or to turn back. In such a case, their lives could not be saved unless one of them should alight and throw his horse headlong into the lake below, and then cling to the rock until the other should pass."

The above quotation affords a striking proof of the false views which may be propagated by a description which, nevertheless, contains a great deal of truth, simply by a tendency to suppression on the one side, and to exaggeration on the other. If the milksop who penned this lugubrious account, and who ought never to have left his peaceful home, had possessed a soul capable of appreciating the majestic scenery through which he passed, the little inconveniences of the journey would have been forgotten in the overwhelming sense of grandeur, and his picture would have been like the representation of another country, and called up a totally different class of ideas. Far different from his were the feelings with which we traversed this noble country, and especially the glorious valley of the Rauma, in which the

fantastic mountains and waterfalls seem to give reality to the fables of the Scandinavian mythology, and every fertile dell to be peopled once more with the heroes of gigantic mould, who went forth from these classic scenes in the early periods of their history.

I have mentioned waterfalls as one of the features of the valley, and they are waterfalls! To have seen those of the British Islands scarcely assists the mind in forming a conception of them, they are so much loftier, larger, and more picturesque. One of the finest is the Monge Fos, the name of which I learned from the boy who rode behind my carriage, and who seemed as eager to direct my attention to its beauties as I was to learn its designation. I do not know the height of this fall, but the water seemed in the first instance, to bend over the ledge of rock, in a fine, transparent film, at an elevation of at least 1,200 feet above the valley. It then dashed into a basin which it had probably wrought for itself, and, after being divided, apparently dispersed, and lost in the slopes of the mountain, it again collected and formed a final magnificent cascade of about 500 feet in height, and then mingled itself with the waters of the Rauma. Of the ethereal beauty of this, as well as of many other of the falls in this valley, I can, however, convey no adequate conception to the mind.

Of the mountains in Romsdalen, the most striking and picturesque, perhaps, is that called, from its peculiar form, Romsdals Horn; and next in singularity are the Troltinderne, or Witch Peaks, which rear their fantastic heads on the other side of the valley. The term Troltinderne,

by which the mountain opposite to the Horn is distinguished, does not so strictly apply to the mountain itself, as to the singularly-formed figures on its summit. They have the appearance of pillars, statues, inverted cones, and in fact, are of almost every conceivable shape; and poised, as they apparently are, loosely on a crest of probably not less than 3,000 feet in height, it seems wonderful that they have not long ago been hurled into the valley by the storms of ages. Anything more bold or strange in outline could scarcely have been conceived by the erratic genius of William Martin. Between these mountains, and at the foot of both, runs the road by the side of the river. The former, Romsdals Horn, rises to the height of nearly 4,000 feet, and being higher than the general range of the mountains, forms a conspicuous object from Molde, from the Fjord, and from various parts of the road. As you approach it through an expansion of the valley, it seems to rear its rugged head above the clouds, in the form of a horn, or rather of an irregular cone of prodigious height and narrow base, rising out of the mountain mass, of which it seems a vast buttress or tower of strength. Close to a farm which lies at the foot of the Horn and bears its name, is a fissure or cleft in the rock, looking as if cut by a sword. It is called St. Olaf's Sword, as this patron saint of the north, following the example of Moses, only with his sword instead of a rod, smote the mountain side, and called forth a spring of water for the supply of the thirsty horses of his troops.

A fine drive of about twenty-three miles, divided into three stages, and requiring three relays of

horses (for the Norwegians are very merciful to their cattle), brought us to Ormen, at a quarter-past three. This station having a good character, we at once determined, although the day was so little advanced, to make it our resting-place for the night; more particularly as the scenery is very fine, and just opposite to the station there is a magnificent waterfall in full view, leaping from shelf to shelf of the mountain side, then rushing sideways along a slanting shoulder, and at last thundering into the Rauma at our feet, whose waters it covers with foam for a considerable distance. Here, then, was music provided to lull us to sleep; but to increase its effect, as well as to improve our appetite for dinner, we determined on a ramble up the opposite mountain, keeping as near to the cataract as possible.

Never, while memory holds her seat, shall I forget this ramble and the impression it made upon me. In fact, we were boys again; and never did schoolboys, turned loose for a holiday, enjoy the sense of freedom and independence more hilariously than we did upon that grand mountain slope. Sometimes peering into the boiling flood, upon which we could lay our hand, or examining the tiny saw-mills, turned by a dribble of the moving mass of water, any considerable branch of which would sweep the whole structure into ruins; then fascinated by a new aspect of the valley and distant mountains, with their convolutions of form and brilliant varieties of colour; and the next minute scrambling through the bushes for wild strawberries, which grow in considerable abundance, and which we relished amazingly—we seemed to have lost our

connection with the great world. We had not for the last fortnight had a syllable of information about England or any part of Europe. Governments might have been changed, empires remodelled, or the Stock Exchange swallowed up by an earthquake; but we, far from the busy haunts of men, in the presence of Nature, and surrounded by her most glorious manifestations, were undisturbed by human passions and cares, and had only to regret that we must soon forsake a scene so lovely.



CHAPTER VIII.

HOLSETH.—DOMBAAS.—ASCENT OF THE DOVRE-
FJELD.—FOLKSTUEN.—A NIGHT DRIVE TO
JERKIN.—SNEEHAETTEN.—THE LEMMING.—
LOST IN A FOG.—A MOUNTAIN FARM.—THE
REINDEER.

Of the next day's proceedings I am not in a condition to give a very particular account, especially of the earlier part of it, as a violent headache deprived me of a considerable portion of its enjoyment. We left our resting-place, however, at seven in the morning, and, after passing through a country of varied but generally noble character, reached Holseth, which is the termination of the Romsdal, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

The country here is much less interesting than that we have travelled through for the last fifty miles, sand and gravel being the principal constituents, instead of the stupendous rocks of gneiss and granite we have left behind us. This station, however, has some geographical interest, inasmuch as the Rauma—on the right bank of which beautiful river we had been wandering during the greater part of two days—here takes its rise in a small lake and flows to the N.W., whilst the Laagen flows from another lake in the neighbourhood to the S.E., and falls into the

Mjosen lake, near Lillehammer, after a course of 150 miles. The next ten miles to Holaker were over an extremely sandy and dusty road, but the country around us, as well as the sides of the road, were thickly overspread with large blocks of primitive rock. We reached this place about a quarter-past four, and immediately on changing horses, pushed on for Dombaas, along the left bank of the Laagen Elv, and reached that station about half-past five. Dombaas is interesting, as being the point at which the road from Christiania divides into two; that to the N.W., which we have just traversed, leading through Romsdalen to Molde, and the other, which runs northward, leading over the plateau of the Dovre-Fjeld to Trondjhem. This station is also particularly interesting to us, as it formed one of the turning-points of our journey. The early part of the day, from my indisposition, had dragged heavily along; but during the last stage, probably from the influence of the mountain air at this increased elevation, I felt so much better, and so fit for work, that, although the day was hot, the roads dusty, and we had driven nearly fifty miles, I ventured to propose to my companions, that, instead of stopping at Dombaas, as we had intended, we should turn our faces northward, ascend the Dovre-Fjeld to Jerkin, a distance of twenty-one miles, spend the night in that mountain solitude, and the next day make a dash at Sneehaetten, which, till very recently, was considered the highest mountain in Norway. This project was instantly adopted, and we forthwith proceeded to carry it out.

We left Dombaas at twenty minutes past six, and soon found the road so steep that it became necessary to leave our carriages and walk up the mountain side. Part of the road to the next station is cut through a fine forest of Scotch pines, and through the openings we have remarkably fine views of the country over which we passed in the earlier part of the day. The lakes which I have mentioned as the sources of the Laagen and the Rauma seem to lie at our feet, and the distant mountains which skirt the Romsdal now stand out in picturesque forms, and reflect the light of the evening sun in the most enchanting manner.

It was nearly eight when we reached Folkstuen, which, like all the stations before-mentioned, is simply a farm-house, with its extensive outbuildings, all of wood. We had left the Scotch firs at a considerable distance below. The elevation is too great, and the climate too severe, to allow of any tree but the birch and the willow, and these are rapidly becoming stunted and shrivelled. A somewhat unpromising situation, you will say, for a farm; and so it is, for of course no corn grows up here, and the only food grown for cattle is the grass of the summer—in the winter, the entire country being covered with snow. We saw a great many cows, however, and the arrangements generally had an air of comfort which could hardly have been expected in so wild and dreary a solitude.

Soon after eight we left Folkstuen, which, by the way, is said to be one of the Fjeld stuer, or mountain resting-places, built for the ancient kings of Norway in their journeys over the

Dovre-Fjeld to Trondjhem. We were already 3,150 feet above the level of the sea, and still ascending, for the road to Jerkin, a distance of nearly fourteen miles farther, seemed to present a gentle acclivity the whole way. The evening set in cold, and at this elevation and latitude, and with the prospect of a late and dreary ride, I rejoiced in having purchased a pair of warm country gloves at the station we had just left. At first, we had a pleasant view of the country, with occasional glimpses of the distant Sneehaetten, which was the main object of our present adventure. At this distance, its name, literally the *Snow Hat*, seemed particularly appropriate, for it had pretty much the appearance of a conical hat or cap of prodigious dimensions, perfectly white, and resting upon the dark shoulders of the mountain below. Presently, however, darkness overspread the mountains, the coldness increased with the advance of night and the increasing elevation, and the absence of the moon, which had cheered us on the Fille Fjeld eight days before, caused us, I believe, to set a higher value upon that luminary. The darkness was such that we could not see the road at all; and, had it not been for the sagacity of our horses, which, on this long and heavy stage, were particularly good, it would have been impossible to have proceeded. At length we had the pleasure of seeing the long-looked for lights of the station just above us, and before eleven, drove into the farmyard, cold, wet, and fatigued. Having taken supper, and felt the cheery influence of the kitchen fire, we ordered horses and guides for the next day, and immediately retired to rest.

A comfortable night's rest having restored us from the fatigue of our seventy miles' drive of the day before, we descended into the farm-yard at eight o'clock on Saturday morning, and found six ponies waiting for us, four for ourselves and our Norwegian friend, and two for the guides who were to accompany us on our somewhat formidable undertaking; not formidable in itself, but rendered so by the little time we allotted to it, and the neglect of precautions which we should have taken, had we been sufficiently aware of its character. In fact, we were misled by John Murray, who states, or rather quotes from some other authority, that "Sneehaetten may be ascended in an easy day from Jerkin." Contrary to our custom, we took this statement more literally than our subsequent experience warranted; for, although from a cause yet to be explained, we did not reach the summit of the mountain, we found it by no means "an easy day" from Jerkin.

On leaving the station, we rapidly ascended for a short distance, till we reached the summit of the Dovre-Fjeld road, which is 4,594 feet above the sea. We then turned off the road into a perfect wilderness, through which we rode fourteen miles, over hills, through bogs, rivers, the dry beds of mountain torrents, along the side of the precipices, sometimes of sand, sometimes of rock, where the track seemed scarcely sufficient for a goat, and about noon came to a halt, where we had to dismount, for the rest of the journey was impracticable, even for Norwegian ponies. Here we rested for a short time, and after luncheon, for which our mountain ride had well prepared

us, set out, accompanied by one of the guides, the other remaining with the horses.

During this ride we discovered some traces of the tracks made by that extraordinary little animal, the lemming, or Norwegian rat, as it is sometimes called, (*mus lemmus* of Linnæus,) which seems to be peculiar to Lapland and the mountains of Norway. The ordinary food of this creature is grass, reindeer moss, &c., and in general it is but little seen. At intervals of from ten to twenty-five years however they emerge from their hiding places, impelled either by deficiency of food or the too great increase of their numbers, and march in immense bodies, in a straight direction, neither turning to the right hand nor to the left, in spite of mountains or rivers, or any other obstacle not absolutely insurmountable, till they perish in the Western Ocean or the Gulf of Bothnia. "They march," says Pennant, in his graphic style, "like the army of locusts so emphatically described by the prophet Joel, destroy every root of grass before them, and spread universal desolation: they infect the very ground, and cattle are said to perish which taste of the grass which they have touched. They swim over the lakes; the greatest rock gives them but a slight check: if they meet a peasant, they persist in their course, and jump as high as his knees in defence of their progress, and if struck, turn about and bite, and will make a noise like a dog. They are the prey of foxes, lynxes, and ermines, who follow them in great numbers. Where the head quarters of these quadrupeds are is not certainly known; but wherever they come from none return: their course

is predestinated, and they pursue their fate." They are about the size of an ordinary rat, say five or five-and-a-half inches in length, with small ears, long black whiskers, and a tail of only half an inch in length. The Laplanders are said to eat them.

The first mile or two of our walk was easily got over ; for, although the road was rough, being simply a wilderness of stones, with an occasional ridge of snow, there was here and there a patch of green sward in a particularly sheltered spot, which made travelling a comparative luxury. Soon, however, everything green totally disappeared, and we had nothing but the rugged boulders, some huge and as firm as the everlasting hills ; others small, sharp, and treacherous, turning over beneath the feet. A little farther on we came to a river, which we had to cross twice, shallow of course, but of considerable width, and formed by the melting of the snows on the mountain above. This we easily accomplished by leaping from stone to stone, with no other mishap than a slight wetting to myself, caused by one of the treacherous boulders already mentioned, which are covered with a vegetable substance as slippery as sea-weed.

By-and-by, however, the fog, which had hitherto prevented us from seeing the mountain, although so near to it, entirely enveloped us in its clammy embrace ; and, what was a much more serious consideration, we found that our active and intelligent young guide had entirely lost sight of his marks, and was in a complete state of bewilderment.

These marks are chiefly stones, remarkable for their size or form, and known only to the guides who occasionally make the ascent ; and to be on these mountain wastes without such landmarks, and in the mists which prevail so extensively in these elevated northern regions, is like being at sea without chart or compass, when neither sun, moon, nor stars are visible.

Under these circumstances, we called a council of war, and had almost decided upon retracing our steps, if, indeed, we could find our way back, when the countenance of our guide brightened up, and he informed us that he detected an opening in the mist, and that, if we waited half an hour, he thought we should be able to proceed. This half-hour he employed in running in all directions to recover his marks ; and certainly, at the end of it, the fog had partially cleared away, and we could see a portion of the mountain slope, although its great bulk was buried in the clouds.

The day was now far advanced, and the period of daylight, in which our work and return must be accomplished, if accomplished at all, fearfully short ; but a gleam of light served to reassure us, and we promptly directed our steps towards the steepest acclivity, as the readiest way of reaching the summit.

During the ascent we were much interested by the sudden appearance of a glacier on our left, on which the sun was struggling to obtain a reflection of its image, but, having to contend with a dense fog, could only diffuse over the frozen snow a singularly coloured atmosphere, of which the effect was quite magical. Ascending

still higher, the fog again enveloped us, and became more dense as the elevation increased, while the extremely slender prospect of obtaining a view from the summit, if we reached it, dispirited us, and made the unaccustomed toil more irksome. Under these circumstances, we again held a consultation, and, on a suggestion of my own, which it required considerable moral courage to offer, decided to return in time to prevent our having to seek repose for the night on the mountain side—a lodging for which we had made no preparation.

The elevation of Sneehaetten is variously estimated at from 7,700 to upwards of 8,000 feet above the level of the sea ; but, although it has this great elevation, it by no means looks so lofty, especially when viewed from the plateau of the Dovre-Fjeld ; the obvious reason for which is, that the Dovre-Fjeld road being itself upwards of 4,000 feet above the sea, the apparent elevation of the mountain, viewed from this position, is only the difference of the two altitudes, or a little higher than our own Snowdon, although the real height is considerably more than twice that of Snowdon.

Jerkin, which we made our resting-place for the Sunday, has considerable attractions for both tourists and sportsmen. It is the largest, the busiest, and the most hospitable station between Christiania and Trondjhem, the modern and ancient capitals of Norway. Here there is ample accommodation both for bed and board, whilst, as an additional attraction to sportsmen, there is said to be abundance of game ; and we ourselves met, whilst walking out here, native hunters

returning with the skins of the reindeer they had shot that morning, suspended on their ponies. Whether for sport, or for the study of the natural history of this remarkable mountain range, one might spend a considerable time pleasantly here, in the very heart of the Dovre-Fjeld.

Although we met with traces of the reindeer both on these mountains and on the Fille Fjeld, we were not fortunate enough to meet with any of these animals alive in their native wilds. We were neither equipped for deer stalking, nor had we time to go in search of them ; and I have no doubt that with the progress of population in this as in other countries, the wild deer is rapidly diminishing in number. The tame reindeer is, however, kept in numerous herds by the Laplanders in the north, and appears not only to constitute the wealth, but to be essential to the existence of this peaceable race. The poetical description of Thomson is literally correct :—

“ Their reindeer form their riches. These their tents,
Their robes, their beds, and all their homely wealth
Supply, their wholesome fare and cheerful cups.
Obedient to their call, the docile tribe
Yield to the sledge their necks, and whirl them swift
O’er hill and dale, heaped into one expanse
Of marbled snow, as far as eye can sweep,
With a blue crust of ice unbounded, glazed.”—[*Winter*.]

In Lapland the reindeer attains its largest development in weight and speed, which render it capable of the most arduous labour and journeys ; but on the Fjelds of the more southerly portions of Norway it is only known as a beast of chase, and when in good condition, its flesh, as we several times had occasion to experience, is not much inferior to the finest venison of our own country.

The station is, in fact, a farm, with an extensive collection of buildings well arranged, and a considerable stock of horses, cows, sheep, and goats; though how they are fed during the winter in this remote mountain solitude, and with the ground covered with snow, I cannot conceive. We visited the dairy, which is a model of neatness, cleanliness, and good order, and the large and comfortable kitchen, where we saw the servants eating their meal of some national dish with evident gusto, and with that peculiar swing of the arm and twirl of the wooden spoon for which these people are celebrated. The rooms devoted to visitors are clean and neat, and the walls are hung with prints, amongst which we found portraits of their kings, Charles XIV. and Oscar, and of Queen Victoria, Daniel O'Connell, and the Duke of Wellington. The attention to guests is everything that can be desired, the station-master being a good-natured and ingenious person, and it was with some reluctance that we left this ancient domicile, to enjoy a pleasant evening drive over the ground we had traversed two days ago under such disadvantageous circumstances.

On the road to Folkstuen, by looking back over the right shoulder, we had some fine views of Sneehaetten and other snow-covered peaks, which look more picturesque at the distance of twenty or thirty miles than in the immediate vicinity. At Dombaas we turned again into the direct road for Christiania, and, proceeding one stage further, arrived at Tofte, which is considered the termination of the Dovre-Fjeld, and here we passed the night.

At the close of the day, I could not help looking back with satisfaction upon the time I had spent upon this mountain range, which had been one of the dreams of my childhood, and the real character of which I had often speculated upon. In early life I had read stories, more or less apocryphal, of its stern ramparts of rock ; of its fierce human inhabitants ; of dreadful accidents by bears, wolves, and other beasts of prey ; and of fearful precipices, over which whole armies had been treacherously led by torchlight, and miserably perished ; and at all times it was associated with images of terror rather than of beauty. Now the illusion was dispelled : I had traversed its wild solitudes. I had scarcely found more beauty than I expected, but the scene was divested of most of its terrors. It had lost the charm of romance in which imagination had invested it, but, in return, it had impressed upon my mind a picture of bold, massive, stern, desolate grandeur, which will never be erased.



CHAPTER IX.

GUDBRANDSDAL.—LAURGAARD.—COLONEL SINCLAIR.—
AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY.—VIIG.—ST. OLAF.
—LILLEHOVE.

Leaving Tofte at half-past five on Monday morning, we soon passed the village of Dovre, and entered upon the Gudbrandsdal, which, next to the Romsdal, is perhaps the finest valley in Norway. The morning was bright but cold, and a fine drive of seven miles brought us to Braendhaugen, and prepared us for an excellent breakfast, to which we did ample justice. We are now fairly in this lovely valley, and have time to look about us ; and certainly there is no want of employment for the eyes, for anything more noble or more delicious than the scenes continually presented to us, can scarcely be imagined. Commencing at the foot of the Dovre-Fjeld, it extends a distance of nearly 170 miles to Lillehammer, where the Laagen Elv, which accompanies it in all its windings, falls into the Mjosen lake. The scenery is bold as well as beautiful, for there are towering mountains on all sides ; but they have none of the bleak, forbidding aspect of the Dovre-Fjeld, being generally covered with pine forests, while the lower part of the valley is eminently fertile ; and, in fact, the scenery forms so decided a contrast to that

we have just left, that, so far from supposing them to be within a few hours' ride of each other, you would naturally conclude, if you did not know the fact, that they were in different climates and quarters of the world.

Another hour's drive, during which we descended about 800 feet in seven miles, brought us to Laurgaard, which, although not remarkable for comfort as a station, is situated in a beautiful part of the road, and, as we had to wait half-an-hour for horses, we employed ourselves in wandering by the river side, amongst the corn-fields, where the barley harvest was just about its completion, and in examining a sort of provision store of considerable extent, in which we found an extraordinary quantity of flat cakes, the ordinary *fladbrød* of the country, very thin, but each cake measuring at least thirty-six inches in diameter, and in piles of from four to six feet high, resting on the ground—no doubt the winter stock of provisions for the farm. The next stage of ten and a half English miles, from Laurgaard to Solheim, is a very interesting one, not only from the splendid natural scenery in which it abounds, but as containing the theatre of an event in Scandinavian history of which the Norwegians are not a little proud:—

In the spring of the year 1612, the young King of Sweden, the celebrated Gustavus Adolphus being engaged in a war with Denmark and Norway, applied to Scotland and the Low Countries for volunteers, as was the practice in those days—a practice which has not been entirely abolished, even in our own times. In obedience to the summons, a Scottish officer, Colonel George Sinclair,

landed in Norway with 900 fellow-countrymen, most of whom bore his own name, and determined boldly to push across the country to Sweden, in spite of all opposition. This however, was a violation of their territory by a hostile force, to which the Norwegians were not at all disposed tamely to submit ; and, after several unsuccessful attempts to drive back the invaders, they decided upon attempting by stratagem what they could not accomplish by force. The Scotch troops, disembarking at Molde, had to pass through the Romsdal and the Gudbrandsdal ; we, therefore, being upon their track for the whole distance, could judge both of their difficulties and the means employed for their destruction. The Kringelen pass appearing the most suitable for the purpose, a number of the peasants collected large stones and other missiles on the summit of the precipitous rocks in such a manner that they could instantly be launched on the heads of the devoted party below. The colonel and his followers having entered the defile, with the carelessness of conscious security, the peasants first obstructed the only passage by which they could have extricated themselves, and then, at the moment of their passing underneath the treacherous ambuscade, at once let loose the accumulated débris, which, like a frightful avalanche, fell upon the unsuspecting soldiers beneath, and crushed them, (to use the language of the native chronicle,) like earthen pots.

Statements differ as to the immediate result of this catastrophe and the slaughter which followed, but all the narratives agree in this, that of the whole 900 who entered the pass of Kringelen

not more than one or two ultimately escaped. The spot where the colonel fell is marked by a small white cross, with this inscription :—" Here lies Colonel George Sinclair, who, with 900 Scotchmen, was slain by the boors of Lessae, Vaage, and Froen." For nearly 250 years the precipice of Kringelen has overhung the narrow pass on one side, while the Laagen has rushed along its margin on the other ; but to this day the peasants of Norway point to this monument as a warning to those who might be disposed to invade their country.

At half-past two a long stage of thirteen miles brought us to Viïg, the birth-place of St. Olaf ; but, whilst going along this magnificent valley, I may state that I had a long and very unexpected journey into dreamland. I suddenly found myself in England, wandering through a lovely vale, and listening to the church bells of the village I was approaching, and to the musical voices of the children, who were singing their evening hymn of praise, in a school by the road-side. In the midst of my enjoyment, however, a chirp, which proved to be that of the skydskarl behind me, brought me back, somewhat rudely, to the mountains of Norway, by which I was surrounded, to the Laagen Elv, which was rushing at my feet with a music exactly like that of the distant bells and of the children singing, to the sultry afternoon by which I had been overcome, and to my horse, which during my wanderings, I had almost allowed to come to a stand on the hot, sandy road.

To say that the scenery is beautiful, is only to repeat what I have said many a time before ;

but the situation of Viig is somewhat peculiar, as the valley, which has been widening considerably for some time, here seems to come to an end, and lose itself in a vast amphitheatre of mountains which surround the station on every side. St. Olaf, whose name occupies a conspicuous place in the history both of Norway and England, and is yet borne by churches in London, was born here nearly nine hundred years ago; and timber, said to be from the ancient house in which he first saw the light, is still shewn in the substantial erection which forms the very comfortable station. If any one should be inclined to inquire into the claim of the said Olaf to the honour of canonization, I must be compelled to admit that, although the conversion of the Norwegians to Christianity is ascribed mainly to him, the process was effected less by force of argument than by force of arms; the simple fact being that Olaf, the Christian, could bring a larger army into the field than Hakon, the Pagan, and the people, being indifferent, naturally submitted to the stronger power. But for hundreds of years afterwards they retained, and in some remote parts of the country, still retain, a predilection for some of their ancient heathen practices. According to Neander, who follows ancient and northern sources of information, the name of this district was changed from Dalen to Gudbrandsdalen, after a powerful native, named Gudbrand, who was a zealous champion of the old religion, but was converted by Olaf from the worship of Thor by an argument very similar to that employed by Elijah to confound the prophets of Baal.

This person assembled the people as Olaf approached, and, telling them that they ought to wonder that the earth had not yet opened to swallow up the profane monster, who presumed to treat the gods with such insolent contempt, said they had only to bring out the great god Thor (a colossal idol) and let him appear in public, when Olaf and his whole force would melt away like wax. These words were received by the multitude with a shout of exultation ; and, clashing together their shields, the crowds of peasantry marched forth to meet the king, who soon put them to flight. Gudbrand's son was taken prisoner, and the king, after detaining him for a few days, sent him back to his father, to announce his own approach. Said Gudbrand, 'Who, then, is this God of the Christians, whom no man has seen or can see? We have a god whom every one can see—the great Thor, in whose presence all must tremble.' A meeting was agreed upon, where each party was to prove the power of its own god. Olaf prepared himself for this meeting, the night previous, by prayer. Next day, the colossal image of Thor, overspread with gold and silver, was drawn to the public place, and around it the Pagans assembled. The king directed Colbein, one of his guards, a man of gigantic stature and of great muscular strength, to stand near him. Gudbrand first made a speech, challenging the Christians to produce proofs of the power of their god, and pointing them to the great Thor, the sight of whom filled them all with alarm. Upon this Olaf spoke : 'You threaten us with your deaf and blind god, soon to meet with a sorry end. But lift up your eyes to the heavens ; behold our God, of whom

you say he can be seen by no one, how majestically he reveals himself in the radiant light!’ The sun burst forth, and, at the same moment, Colbein, as previously directed by the king, demolished with a single blow the mighty idol. The monster fell, crumbled into small fragments, out of which crept a great multitude of mice, snakes, and lizards. Gudbrand was no longer disposed to stake everything upon a god that could not help himself.

“The embittered state of feeling occasioned by Olaf’s despotic severity probably facilitated the conquest of the country by Canute, king of Denmark and England. The banished Olaf returned and prepared himself for a new struggle. He would receive none but Christians into his army. He caused the shields and helmets of his soldiers to be emblazoned with the sign of the Cross, and gave them, as his watchword, ‘Onward, warriors of Christ, the Cross and the King!’ He was mortally wounded in battle on the 29th of July, 1033, and soon after his death, honoured by the Christians as a martyr. The fame of the miracles wrought at his tomb spread far and wide. The day on which he died was universally observed as a festival by the people of the north.”*

Leaving this interesting station, we passed on by way of Oien to Lillehove, a distance of fourteen miles, still along the banks of the river, overshadowed by pine forests, and in the midst of scenery which, beautiful in itself, bears every mark of high cultivation, industry, and prosperity.

At Lillehove, we found ourselves in most excellent quarters. The buildings, although entirely

* Neander’s “Church History,” Fourth Period, Section First.

of wood, have far more pretensions both to elegance and comfort than any other of the stations we have yet seen, and indicate a considerable amount of prosperity in the occupants. As usual, the edifices are detached; but the main building—occupied by the family, and, in this instance, including the kitchen—is very extensive, the rooms being spacious and lofty even for Norway, where timber is so cheap; and the front is furnished with a substantial verandah or covered way, which materially adds to the appearance as well as the comfort of the house, for it is quite of an ornamental character. The principal rooms are handsomely furnished in the modern style, including, amongst other articles of luxury, carpets and a fine-toned piano, neither of which are very common in Norwegian stations.

Returning to the house at six o'clock, after an hour's walk, to give time for the preparation of dinner, we found, notwithstanding the absence of the master and mistress, a repast prepared for us which entirely corresponded with the appearance of comfort in the house, consisting of wild ducks, roast mutton, and other articles, not only excellent in quality, but cooked and served in a style not at all Scandinavian, and which did great credit to the domestic arrangements.

This little hamlet is very delightfully situated close to the post road, on the declivity of the mountain, facing the river which runs below, and commands fine views of the valley east and west, and of the pine-covered mountains opposite. Near the station there is a little church, of an octagonal form, with lofty party-coloured spire, which in any other country would be considered a great curiosity.

CHAPTER X.

ELSTAD. — SAIL ON THE LOSUA. — NORWEGIAN
HORSE FAIR. — LILLEHAMMER. — CHRISTIANIA.
— HOTEL ACCOMMODATION. — PUBLIC BUILD-
INGS. — OSCARSHALL. — CHRISTIANSAND. —
HOME.

At half-past ten next morning we left this delightful resting-place, on our last day of carrioling — a mode of travelling which had afforded us a good deal of pleasurable excitement, and which we were somewhat reluctant to relinquish. At twelve we arrived at Elstad, which is said to be the most beautiful situation on the road, but which the heavy rain prevented us from seeing to advantage. At this place the river expands into a beautiful lake, its banks, fringed with pine, birch, and other forest trees, rising in graceful curves from the shore over the lofty mountains, which at one time retire majestically to a distance from the water, and at another seem to look down from their very summits into its depths. Here, therefore, we embarked with our carriages and luggage, and, after a sail of about fourteen miles, the latter part of which we enjoyed all the more, as the sun had driven away the clouds, and the rain had ceased, we reached Baadstø, and had a pleasant walk of a mile and a half to

Holmen, where we arrived at three, and from which place we sent horses for our carriages and luggage.

At this place a great horse fair is held annually for three days ; the day of our arrival happened, fortunately, to be the first day of the fair. Although the horses had not generally arrived, nor the sale commenced, we were thus enabled to see a large and jovial collection of Norwegians on a somewhat festive occasion. In the large field or inclosure in which the fair is held, there were a great number of temporary wooden sheds, some employed as stables, others as tents for the visitors, and others as refreshment-rooms and toy shops, where all sorts of fancy articles and indigestible compounds were sold to the young people of both sexes, who flocked to this scene of festivity much as the corresponding classes in England do to our wakes and fairs. One large shed, more carefully built than the rest, and capable apparently of accommodating some 200 or 300 persons, was fitted up as a dining-room for the people of business who required refreshments ; and here, although we had not the opportunity of dining with them, we saw something of the jovial way in which they carry on their entertainments. As with us, the substantial part of the dinner was got through very quietly, but afterwards there were toasts, speeches, applause, and a good deal of excitement, as though, instead of a market dinner, it had been a great political or philanthropic gathering.

At half-past four we left Holmen, and, after descending a steep hill through a grand old pine forest, commanding exquisite views of the valley,

and the river which flows through it, reached Mosshuus, seven miles, at half-past five. Immediately changing horses, we set out on our journey to Lillehammer, along the beautiful Laagen, by woods, mountains, and cascades, a distance of twelve miles, and arrived before seven o'clock. On driving into the yard of Mr. Hammer's hotel, we were concerned to find the house quite full, but ultimately secured a sort of ante-room near the front door, in which portable beds were speedily extemporized for the whole of us. Here we sat down to an excellent dinner with a large party of ladies and gentlemen, most of whom were English, and afterwards took a walk in the town.

Lillehammer, being situated at the head of the lake Mjosen, and at the terminus of steam communication in Norway, is much visited, and is a common resting-place for travellers. It is a flourishing little town, with wide streets, clean and neat; the wooden houses neatly painted, nearly all having flowers and plants in the windows, which form a pleasing contrast to the white window-curtains in general use. The churchyard participates in the air of neatness which pervades the town, and the graves are generally covered with flowers, which, in most cases, seem to be regularly renewed, and kept in excellent order.

At nine in the morning of the last day of August, we embarked on the Mjosen lake, and after a beautiful sail of seventy miles, although the weather was squally, with occasional showers, reached Eidsvold at half-past four, and Christiania at seven, by the very last train run by the com-

pany, as the next day it went into the hands of Government, according to agreement. We at once took up our quarters at the Victoria, the principal inn in the capital, which we found excessively full, but, upon the whole, a comfortable, well-arranged, and well-managed hotel. The mode of receiving company at this and other Norwegian hotels is very different from that adopted in England, and affords a striking illustration of the independence of the Scandinavian character. At first, you are surprised that there are no waiters in attendance to usher you into the house, take charge of your luggage, and await your orders. On inquiry, however, you are directed to the counting-house, where sits the manager or head of the establishment, and to him you make known your wants, much as you would apply at the office of an English manufactory, if you wished to order goods. This gentleman informs you whether there are rooms to spare, and what kind of accommodation you may expect, and on your desiring it,—not before, he requests the proper person to shew you to your apartments. There is civility, and just the attention which is indispensable,—nothing more. At first, all this seems odd enough; but you soon get not only reconciled to it, but pleased with it. The sleeping-rooms look out upon a gallery which runs along three sides of a large court-yard, and in this gallery we and many other visitors sat to take our coffee after dinner, and enjoy the fresh air and sunshine.

The dining-room is a large saloon, where probably fifty persons, of various nations, sat down to an excellent dinner every day; and so full

was the house when we were there, that, on looking into it at night, I found two rows of beds occupying the sides of the room, in the manner of the wards in one of our hospitals.

Next day we commenced our perambulations about the capital, which, although not at all imposing in respect of architectural display, is a clean, neat, and apparently prosperous town. The streets are generally laid out in parallel rows, one half crossing the other at right angles, so that it is extremely easy to find your way from one part of the town to another.

Oslo, the site of which is now occupied by the eastern suburb of Christiania, was the capital of southern Norway, from the days of Harald Hardraade, till the year 1624. But in this year the town having been destroyed by fire, Christian IV, whose name occupies so conspicuous a place in the history of the country, in the seventeenth century, founded the new city, which, like Peter the Great, he called after himself. Notwithstanding its deserved reputation for the fertility and beauty of its situation, the capital, having been built at so late a period, and therefore destitute of those historical monuments which give dignity to older cities, is in itself comparatively uninteresting. A very great improvement has, however, been going on since the Norwegians regained their independence.

Christiania was formerly built of wood, like most of the Norsk towns, in consequence of which it was subject to frequent and destructive fires. In April, 1858, especially, a fire broke out in the centre of the town, and was only arrested after it had destroyed property valued at between £300000

and £400,000 sterling, and deprived upwards of 1,000 people of their dwellings. In consequence of these conflagrations, a law was passed, prohibiting the use of wood as the sole building material, and therefore the houses are now generally built of brick.

Of the public edifices of Christiania, the new palace of the King and the University are the most noticeable. They are both well situated in a wide thoroughfare, at a little distance from the town, and, although possessed of no great architectural beauty, seem well arranged for their respective purposes. The palace has the advantage of situation, and commands, especially from the roof, magnificent views of the city, the windings of the Fjord, and the beautiful country in almost every direction. We found the University, with its admirable library and very interesting museum, partially closed, from some cause, but were kindly shewn through a considerable portion of both by the officers and professors who happened to be present. Professor Schrubeler especially, the very able superintendent of the botanical department, took a great deal of pains to explain to us the arrangement of his collection, which in some respects resembles that at our own Kew Gardens, but is much less extensive and complete.

The National Gallery is well worth a visit, but presents no peculiar features requiring description, and the same may be said of most of the public buildings and institutions in the city. An exception must, however, be made in favour of the country house of the late King Oscar, built about twelve years ago (1847-8), and named after its owner, Oscarshall. The house is a beautiful

object in itself, in respect of design and architectural features ; it is still more beautiful for the situation in which it stands, and most of all, for the treasures of native art with which it is enriched. It is a very pretty ride or sail from Christiania of a few miles ; and, approaching it from the Fjord, as we did, having hired a boat for the purpose, it forms a delightful feature in a lovely landscape. The flat roof of the main building, and still more the summit of the lofty tower by which it is surmounted, commands a most extensive panoramic view, extending from the blue hills of the Christiania valley, far away in the north, to the Fjord, as it vanishes from the sight in the south with its numerous and picturesque islands. The interior is handsomely furnished and decorated, but has evidently been designed chiefly as a frame for the works of art which were produced for its embellishment. Here we find busts and statues of all the most distinguished kings, heroes, and statesmen of Norway, placed upon pedestals modelled in exact harmony with the character of the building, and all by Norwegian artists ; whilst the walls, divided into panels and compartments for the purpose, are covered with great national pictures by Tidemand, Gude, and other distinguished painters. For instance, in the dining-room, the walls of which are divided symmetrically into panels of beautifully-carved oak, we have in the largest panels six fine landscapes, representing some of the finest scenery in Norway, and to the faithfulness of some of which I can bear personal testimony ; whilst, in the ten smaller panels under the ceiling, we have ten compositions of

Tidemand, representing the life of a Norwegian peasant from childhood to old age, and forming an affecting commentary on the "Seven Ages" of our own immortal poet. Similarly, in another part of the building, there is a richly-decorated apartment, containing nine basso-relievos by Borch, representing scenes and incidents in the *Fridthjofs-Saga*, an ancient Scandinavian chronicle, and four landscapes by Gude, from the Sogne Fjord, which was the scene of the exploits described in this ancient national monument. In short, this little palace is a pleasant proof of the good taste and love of the fine arts possessed by the enlightened monarch by whom it was erected.

The only ecclesiastical edifice in Christiania worthy of attention is the cathedral, a plain building, of considerable size, with some pictorial decorations, and the usual furniture and images about the altar. In the vestry we observed a series of portraits of the Bishops of Christiania from the earliest times, ending with Bishop Sörenson, the grandfather of our conductor.

But, although the capital contains few objects of architectural or general interest, a residence here must be very pleasant: in the summer, from the beautiful scenery of the environs, and in the winter from the freedom of social intercourse which is maintained both amongst natives and foreigners. The noble views commanded by the numerous eminences at a short distance from the city, extending from the snow-capped mountains of the west to the Swedish frontier—the gorgeous sunsets and picturesque windings of the Fjord, the blending of primitive wildness with high cultivation in the nearer view, and the long

northern day of the summer months—afford constant inducements to rambles or drives in the neighbourhood. Many of the detached residences near the town, and which are easily attainable by persons in moderate circumstances, are charmingly situated. Of this character is one to which I took a drive with our travelling companion, and which is occupied by his mother and sister, who received me in the most friendly manner. It is a convenient and airy residence, about two miles from the city, in the midst of a large orchard with walks and ornamental trees, like the ground of a gentleman's villa, and commands fine views of the country and the Fjord; and many, still more beautiful both for situation and appearance, are to be seen in various directions.

As to society, its advantages are sought chiefly in winter, when the nights in these high latitudes are very long; but, had it been otherwise, the shortness of our stay would have prevented our cultivating it. We spent one pleasant evening, however—the only one we could spare—with our kind and excellent friends, Mr. and Mrs. Shaw, (who have since returned to England), and were speedily initiated in various peculiarities of Norwegian life and manners which had hitherto escaped our notice.

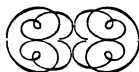
On Friday evening, September 2nd, we bade adieu to the kind friends who had facilitated our arrangements and whose hospitality we had shared, and commenced our homeward voyage in the "Scandinavian," the same ship which had brought us out. We had a pleasant voyage down the Fjord, and the next morning at nine, again cast anchor in the beautiful harbour of Christiansand.

Here, having two or three hours to spare, we went ashore and walked through the town by the banks of the river, and to the cathedral, which contains some singular paintings and bas-reliefs, but which we found more curious than beautiful. In the town we had a striking proof of the dangers incurred by those who live, not in glass, but in wooden houses; as, a fire having occurred a few days before our arrival, a considerable number of houses had been entirely destroyed, and no indications of their existence left except a few charred stumps, which projected above the sandy soil.

Christiansand was established in a somewhat singular way. In 1641 the site was unoccupied except by forest trees, but its advantageous situation for commerce being obvious to the advisers of King Christian IV, more especially as it had a good harbour, and was in the vicinity of a considerable timber trade, that enterprising monarch determined to build a town, and, as in the case of the capital, to call it after his own name. Six of the most respectable and wealthy of the peasantry, were then ordered to take up their abode in the dwellings thus provided for them, and were constituted the first magistrates. The same despotic process was afterwards repeated on a larger scale, and the new town was made the head of the entire district in which it was situated, ultimately becoming the capital of the province, and the residence of the Bishop and Prefect. With some fluctuations it has continued to enjoy a considerable amount of prosperity, and has a rather important shipping trade, with a population of, I believe, between 8000 and 9000 souls.



Finally, having spent two or three hours pleasantly in exploring the town, and walking by the banks of the Torrisdals Elv, we embarked at noon,—speedily lost sight of the weather-beaten coast of Norway ; and after a somewhat stormy passage, again found ourselves safely moored in the port of Hull, on Monday about mid-day.



CHAPTER XI.

DIVERSITY OF NORWEGIAN SCENERY. — EARLY HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE.—THEIR CHARACTER AND RELATION TO OURSELVES.—THEIR SCANTY NUMBERS ACCOUNTED FOR.—THEIR PRESENT STATE.

My unpretending journal having unexpectedly found itself exalted to the dignity of Roman type, it would not, perhaps, be improper or entirely useless to some of those who may honour it with a perusal, to append to it a few last words on matters generally connected with the country and its inhabitants.

One of the principal attractions of Norway is the scenery, which, I need not say, is magnificent; and, although I have described its principal features in my notes, and dwelt at some length upon particular instances, I must be permitted, even at the risk of appearing to repeat myself, to call attention to one of its characteristics—its wonderful diversity.

What a striking contrast betwixt the stern grandeur of the Western coasts and the exquisite beauty of such lovely valleys as that of the Strande Fjord! In the one case, we have the rugged and majestic mountains presenting their snowy heads and bold escarpments to the Western gales; in the latter, beautiful dells, with silvery streams

or glassy lakes, their fertile shores studded with rustic villages and farm buildings, with here and there a church, and its accompanying parsonage ; while up the slopes of the hills are seen smiling pastures and corn-fields, with woods of pine, birch, alder, and sycamore, diversifying the scene. I was particularly struck with the birch, which, perhaps, next to the pine or Scotch fir, is the most common tree in Norway. In the upper regions, and near the verge of vegetable life, it dwindles to the size of a shrub ; but in the lower and more fertile valleys, it is a most elegant and stately tree ; and, accustomed to it as I became, by seeing it everywhere, I could not help stopping occasionally to admire the silvery bark and fairy-like pendulous foliage of a particularly fine specimen.

Besides these larger varieties of the vegetable creation, there are numberless fruits and flowers, of brilliant colours and delicate flavour ;—the gorgeous foxglove and monkshood, the pansy, with its flowers of gentle blue, and the wild strawberry and raspberry, which are so delicious to the taste of the fatigued and heated traveller when plucked by his own hand in the midst of his rambles.

In some cases, the transition is made with extreme rapidity from bold mountain scenery to that of the placid and lovely valley. Travelling eastward, for instance, across the Fille Fjeld, a few hours serve to conduct us from the wild, desolate, and stormy grandeur of Nystuen to the gentle beauty which surrounds Lillestrand, where not only the appearances of Nature, but the people, the buildings, the temperature, and the vegetation, are those of another region.

Indeed, from the peculiar conformation of the country, these contrasts may be perceived at once ; for whilst the mountain's brow is agitated by furious storms and winds, which threaten to tear the very hills from their foundations, the air of the valley is so still, that there is scarcely a ripple on the lake, a murmur in the forest, or a perceptible vibration amongst the standing corn.

But, notwithstanding the magnificence of the scenery in this noble country, it is to the people that we should turn with the greatest interest, both from their early and eventful history, their relation to us as our remote ancestors, their manners and customs, which so accurately represents the ways of our forefathers in the olden time, and the hopeful future to which they may look forward as a nation.

The ancient history of Scandinavia, like that of most countries, is so mixed up with fable, that it is entirely impossible to distinguish between the true and the false, or to state anything certain as to the course of events till the period when the people had acquired a literature of their own, or had become mixed up with other races which possessed historical records. From the best means of information at our command, however, we may safely conclude that the old Norsemen, perhaps under the command of a hero called Odin, (for we can scarcely imagine that a person who occupies so conspicuous a place in their early traditions had no existence,) emigrated from the steppes of Asia at a remote period, traversed the continent of Europe in a north-westerly direction, planted colonies in the countries surrounding the Baltic sea, and finally

settled in, and occupied the great Peninsula, which now constitutes the kingdom of Sweden and Norway. In the meantime, their leader Odin, (gratefully remembered for the achievements which his force of character and military prowess had enabled them to accomplish,) was, while he lived, invested by these ferocious tribes with undisputed authority, and after his death, worshipped as a god.

But whether conducted by one or more leaders, and in one or more waves of migration, the country they occupied was for a long period divided into a great many petty kingdoms and principalities ; and it is a remarkable historical fact, that the states of Norway were first united into one kingdom under Harold Harfaagre within half a century after a similar event had transpired in England under Egbert, in Scotland under the second Kenneth, and in the west of Europe under Charlemagne.

Before this period, the Norwegians are represented as being the scourge of Europe, and their sea-kings as being pirates of the most brutal and ferocious kind, who swarmed upon the ocean, plundered every district they could approach,—knew no glory but in the destruction of their fellow-creatures, and considered piracy as the most honourable way of acquiring riches.

It must be remembered, however, that these accounts are given by the persons who suffered from the mal-practices of these marauders, and are not therefore likely to have softened down the dark shade of the picture ; on the contrary, the monkish historians display an asperity of feeling which, however excusable under the cir-

cumstances, requires to be guarded against, in estimating the value of their testimony. When they represent the Norsemen as mere barbarians,—little better than wild beasts,—and without law or religion; there must, as Mr. Laing justly observes, be “exaggeration, as there is evident inconsistency in these representations. These barbarians were evidently the only people in Europe, at that period, possessed of the arts connected with the navigation of vessels on distant voyages. If we consider all that is included in this art, all that must have been set to work before two or three hundred men could be transported to the coast of Normandy or Kent, the ship building, rope making, sail weaving, iron forging, water-cask making, provision curing, all of which arts and many more, must have reached considerable perfection before bodies of men however enterprising, bold and hardy, could by any possibility have undertaken and accomplished such voyages; if we consider too, that there must have been effective social arrangements, by which such bodies of men were collected and held together, and made available for attack and defence, as well as for navigation; we must conclude, that the term ‘barbarism’ was more applicable to the invaded than the invaders.” In short, not only in the possession of many useful arts, but also in the principles of government, in the operation of equitable laws for the protection of property, and in the exercise of many checks on the ferocity of the ruder ages, which were desirable for social comfort, the Norwegians were far in advance of the feudal nations of Europe, which, instead of imparting

the ideas of chivalry which are usually ascribed to them, in all probability only adopted them from their conquerors, and incorporated them with their own constitution and modes of thinking. It is for this reason that the habits of these northern tribes have left such an impress upon ourselves ; and that there are so many points of contact between the two countries both in ancient and modern times.

Their relation to ourselves is not merely a matter of history. Their invincible courage in a hundred fights ; the spirit of adventure which has conducted them to so many distant lands ; the faculty of colonization, which they possess in so remarkable a degree ; their commercial enterprise, displayed especially in the earlier period of their history ; their love of fair play ; their maintenance of civil and religious liberty ; their thorough independence of character ; and last, but not least, their physiognomy of the old English type ; all these, and many other characteristics which might have been mentioned, taken, not individually but collectively, stamp them as of our own blood, and distinguish them from all other races, whether Gallic or German, with which we might be supposed to have some affinity. Indeed, so thoroughly do they retain the look and manner which we are accustomed to ascribe to our sturdy population, whether of the seafaring or of the agricultural class, that a traveller, who had the opportunity of seeing a good deal of them, described them as "more English than the English themselves." It is certain that they have preserved the national characteristics more pure and uncontaminated. But everything in

their early literature and history establishes this relation. Their literature, indeed, is that which was common to the entire Scandinavian population, embracing not only Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, but Iceland, Shetland, the Faroe Islands, and the various coasts, whether of Britain or other countries, on which these adventurous wanderers set their feet and established a home. Hence the ancient ballads, and still more ancient tales, which form so large a portion of the literature of a primitive people, are found in all these countries; and, although it would be extremely difficult to trace them to their origin in any given locality, their universal diffusion is traceable to the similarity of language and national character, as well as to the facilities of communication afforded by the ocean, which was their common home.

And while our literature reminds us of this relationship, still more forcibly does our history lead us back "to the old Scandinavian heroes, the discoverers of Iceland, the settlers in Greenland, the predecessors of Columbus in America, the loyal life-guardsmen of Constantinople, the co-inheritors of English soil, the besiegers of Paris, and the proprietors of Normandy under Rolf, 'the sea-horse,' renowned forefather of that terrible 'splendour of God,' the second Duke William, who, in due time, conquered from the ill-starred Saxons our beautiful England, the mythical paradise of his ancestors, and who, by that final act of conquest, rendered it henceforth for ever unconquerable."

If then, it may be asked, the Norwegians have that force of character which distinguishes our

race, and accounts for its extension and its triumphs, how does it happen that they are so few in number, and that acre for acre the population is less than one-twentieth of that of Great Britain? Probably other causes might be assigned, but it will be sufficient to mention a fact which I have already indicated, viz: that seven-eighths of the entire country are at an elevation of more than 800 feet, and three-fourths at an elevation of 2,000 feet and upwards above the level of the sea, and also that of the remaining eighth a considerable portion consists of water or bare rock, and is entirely incapable of being brought under cultivation. In most other countries, even the most mountainous, there are valleys of considerable width and extent, which afford opportunities for agricultural operations, and supply abundance of food for the people. Norway is an exception to this rule, the valleys being generally, exceedingly narrow, with steep and rugged sides, their bottoms frequently not more than one or two hundred yards in width and strewed with fragments of rock, which leave little space for the labours of the husbandman. There are larger valleys it is true, but these, communicating with the sea, constitute the Fjords already described, and are chiefly filled with water, enclosed by their precipitous mountain sides. The mountains are indeed partially clothed with grass during the short summer, and available for sæter farms; but even these portions are covered with snow during the greater part of the year, whilst vast ranges are perfectly sterile or inaccessible. Considering, then, that the capability of a country to support a large population depends,

not on the number of square miles comprised within its frontier, but on the extent of their productiveness, we shall cease to wonder at the comparatively scanty population of such a country as Norway.

Besides the unfavourable influence which is necessarily exercised upon the social development of the people by the physical peculiarities of the country, the long subjugation of Norway under the Danish monarchy may be mentioned as a cause of deterioration. Without going into an historic induction of facts to establish the truth of this observation, it may be sufficient to adduce as corroborative of it, the vastly improved condition of the people since their emancipation, which, although brought about in opposition to their wishes and in manifest violation of their rights, has yet produced the most beneficial effect upon their condition. Although annexed to Sweden, and placed under the government of the Swedish monarch, they have both resolutely and successfully maintained their nationality, their free constitution, their parliament chosen by the people, and possessed of ample legislative powers, and even still more recently, the national flag, distinct from that of Sweden.

The enthusiasm with which the people hailed the promulgation of the constitution has been justified by the experience of more than forty years, and although this is, perhaps, a short period in the lifetime of a nation, it has served to consolidate their liberties, to develop the best points in their ancient character, and to prove that they are capable of self-government, and prepared for the introduction of all those reforms

and modifications in the business of government which experience may prove to be desirable.

One proof of the happiness of the people, under the present state of things, is found in their spontaneous expressions of loyalty, which are only exceeded in fervency by the outbursts of patriotism, which are always called forth when "Gamle Norge" becomes the topic of conversation. Several travellers, besides ourselves, have observed the frequency with which the portraits of the kings John and Oscar are found in the houses of the peasantry and farmers in every part of the country, and I have no doubt that his present majesty, Charles XV., occupies the same position in public favour. His reign was commenced under favourable auspices, and I was glad to read in the public papers, on the occasion of his opening the Norwegian Diet for the first time after his accession, and swearing before the representatives of the people "to govern the kingdom of Norway in accordance with the constitution and laws," that the sincere emphasis with which his majesty subsequently prayed "that God would endow him with strength to keep the oath," made a favourable impression on the Diet, who, in replying to the king's speech, by dwelling especially on the royal approval of a proposed law for the introduction of trial by jury, shewed that they regarded this as one of the most important measures to be discussed during the session.

It may not be uninteresting to add that, next to the portraits of their own kings, that of queen Victoria enjoyed, in many places, the largest share of public patronage.

CHAPTER XII.

**TENURE OF LAND.—CONDITION OF AGRICULTURAL
POPULATION. — COMMERCIAL AND SHIPPING
INTEREST. — LEGISLATION. — JURISPRUDENCE.
—RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.**

The mode in which the land is held, and always has been held, by the bonders or peasant proprietors of Norway, is both an illustration and a consequence of the independent character of the people. Their estates, not having been conveyed to them in return for services promised or performed, nor purchased from prior owners, nor subject to any claims of the State, except such as are voluntarily undertaken and acknowledged by themselves for the common benefit, they are the absolute owners of the soil, in a sense more strict and rigorous than the landowners of any other country. In this country the possession of land, in fee-simple, which is the most absolute kind of property, does not render a man proprietor in the same strict sense. The feudal system recognises obligations or services as the tenure on which the property is held, whereas the allodial system, which springs out of the right of conquest, implies absolute dominion, without any condition whatever. And this sense of absolute property, undisputed and indisputable, which has always been maintained in Norway

from the earliest times, in all probability, not only springs from the characteristic tendency, but also tends to foster this tendency to independence of feeling ; while, on the other hand, their wants being confined to the means of production within themselves, their sense of sufficiency has still further deprived them of the benefits of intercourse with other nations.

“If there be a happy class of people in Europe,” says Mr. Laing, “it is the Norwegian bonder. He is the owner of his little estate ; he has no feu-duty or feudal service to pay to any superior. He is king of his land, and landlord as well as king. He is well lodged, has abundance of fuel, and that quantity of land, in general, which does not place him above the necessity of personal labour, but far above privation or want, if sickness or age should prevent him from working. He has no class above him, nobody who can look down upon him, or whom he or his family look up to, either to obtain objects of a false ambition or to imitate out of a spirit of vanity. He has a greater variety of food than the same class in other countries ; for, besides what his farm produces, which is mostly consumed in his house-keeping, the fjeld, the lakes, and rivers, and the fjords afford game, fish, and other articles. He has also variety of labour, which is, perhaps, amongst the greatest enjoyments of the labouring man, for there is recreation in change. His distant sæter, his wood-cutting for fuel, his share of the fishery in the neighbouring river or lake, give that sort of holiday-work which is refreshing. His winter toil is of the same kind, as steady agricultural labour in the field is out of the question. It

consists in making all the implements, furniture, and clothing that his family may require ; threshing out the crops, attending to the cattle, distilling his potatoes, brewing, and driving about to fairs or visits. He has no cares for his family, because he knows what their condition will be after his death. He knows that his wife succeeds to him, and as long as she lives unmarried, the only difference made by his death is, that there is one less in the family. On his death or second marriage, he knows that each of his children has a right to a share in his property, and, according to their number, he makes his arrangements for their either living on the land as before, or dividing it, or for being settled in other occupations, and taking a share of the value when it comes to be divided."

Now, although this picture is perhaps somewhat over-coloured by the enthusiasm of the writer, and, in one or two points is scarcely consistent with the representations I have made, it gives, upon the whole, a proper view of the state of the bonder class of Norway. And if this class is not a happy and prosperous one, it is not for want of legislative power and influence, as to all intents and purposes, the direction of public affairs is in their hands, and their measures are generally taken with a view to maintain the supremacy and lighten the burdens of the agricultural interest, the manufacturing and commercial interests not being of such weight and influence as to offer any successful opposition. With the exception of this natural leaning to the interests of their order, however, their proceedings are, I believe, dictated by a sense of justice and honour

which may well compare with those of any governing body in the world.

The commercial body however, although still comparatively small and uninfluential, appears to be rapidly increasing in importance. The internal trade and the manufacturing system will probably, from the character of the country and the habits of the people, be very slowly, if at all, more developed than at present. The absence of roads is sufficient to account for the former and the absence of coal for the latter deficiency. Various metals are found in the country, and silver and iron are both produced of excellent quality, but the production is confined within very narrow limits. But the foreign trade presents a totally different aspect, and the sea-coasts and forests are an almost inexhaustible source of wealth in fish and timber, which may be considered the staple trades of the country. In proof of the rapid progress made in commerce with other nations, we have not only the general testimony of residents and travellers, but the irrefragable logic of figures, given in the Parliamentary report of the Committee on Merchant Shipping, which sat in 1859; and which includes the elaborate tabular returns of Mr. Crowe, the Consul-general, the accuracy of which will not be disputed. From these returns it appears that the tonnage of shipping in the foreign trade of Norway was in 1850, 866,517 tons, and in 1858, 1,171,662 tons, shewing an increase of 35 per cent., and presenting a very respectable total for so small a population. But the proportion of this tonnage carried in Norwegian ships shews a still larger rate of increase; for while in 1850 it was

represented by 646,757 tons, in 1858 we have 935,715 tons, shewing an improvement in the amount of native shipping of nearly 45 per cent. The cross trade shews a still larger increase in Norwegian vessels, no doubt owing in a great measure to the repeal of our navigation laws. In short, to use the words of one of the witnesses, "A few years ago, the Norwegian flag was scarcely ever seen beyond the confines of Europe, and it now waves in every part of the globe."

I have slightly alluded to the legislation of the country as being chiefly in the hands of the agricultural body : this however, is but a consequence of the relative weight of this body in point of numbers, wealth, and position. The government is strictly a constitutional one, as much so as that of England ; and, with somewhat different forms, is conducted in a similar spirit, and with the same attention to the welfare and liberty of the subject.

The sovereign, who is neither a hired functionary nor an absolute monarch, has a legitimate share of influence and prerogative, conducts the diplomatic intercourse with foreign states, and is the fountain of justice throughout the kingdom. The *Storthing*, or parliament, assembles triennially for three months, or as long as may be necessary, not by a royal summons, but of its own right, and consists of representatives chosen from the electoral districts in proportion to the number of qualified voters. The house is divided into two chambers, the upper or *Lagthing*, consisting of one-fourth of the entire number of members, and the lower or *Odelsting*, of the remaining three-fourths. All measures must originate in the

lower house, but are sent up to the Lagthing for more careful deliberation and revision. No minister of the crown is admitted into the Storthing except to communicate a royal message or project of law for the consideration of the body; and although the king has a veto on the decision, should a measure have passed the Storthing in three successive sessions, it acquires the force of law without the royal assent. This in fact, is precisely what took place in 1824, when the abolition of hereditary nobility, which had been proposed in 1815, was effected in opposition to the wishes of the king, who had used every means to induce the assembly to abandon a measure of which he highly disapproved.

The forms of jurisprudence are also characteristic of the independence and simplicity of manners of the people, and have scarcely received any modification for many centuries. Parties having disputes with each other must in the first instance apply to the Court of Mutual Agreement, presided over by an arbitrator like my friend Skoien before mentioned, who is elected by the resident householders in the parish. He hears the evidence, explains the difficulties, and in many cases effects a reconciliation, and saves the parties the expense and trouble of a lawsuit. Should this not be accomplished, he transmits the suit to the Court of the *Sorenskriver*, which is something like our quarter sessions, except that the law and pleadings are brought to bear upon the evidence already taken in the court below. The next court of appeal is that of the *Stifts-amt*, which is fixed in the principal towns of the four provinces or *Stifts* into which the kingdom is

divided, and whose province it is to review the proceedings in all the inferior tribunals. Finally, every litigant still unsatisfied, whether in civil or criminal cases, may appeal to the *Hoieste Ret*, or highest court which sits in Christiania ; but in all cases, the judges are responsible for their decisions, and liable for any consequences which may arise from erroneous judgments.

In short, their whole internal arrangements are suitable to the state of society in which they have originated ; and although looked at from the point of view occupied by other nations they may appear in some respects defective, they harmonize with the independence, patriotism, and sense of justice which characterize the race. Such indeed is the attachment of these hardy sons of the North to their country and its ancient institutions, that there is little probability of change or abuse springing from themselves ; and the magic cry of "Old Norway" will long excite their enthusiasm and form the most popular theme of their native minstrelsy.

Of still greater importance in estimating the condition of a people, as most of my readers will admit, is the religious element of their character, and the extent to which it influences their habits and conduct ; for, whatever excellencies may be otherwise possessed, or however otherwise advantageous the position which may have been attained, the whole history of the world is a standing commentary on the declaration of Solomon, that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

There are two aspects in which the question of religion may be viewed—its outward and

visible development, and its influence on the character and spiritual condition of the individual ; the latter being by far the most important.

The form of Christianity adopted in Norway, as in the Scandinavian countries generally, is the Lutheran, which seems to hold, in respect of confession and ritualism, a middle place between Catholicism on the one hand, and the more advanced Protestantism of our own country on the other. There is one circumstance, however, which distinguishes the Norwegian Church and that of the Danes, their former masters, from that of the Swedes, their present allies, namely, its toleration. In the question of religious liberty, the practical and just ideas of the Norwegians have led them to adopt a course which contrasts very favourably with that pursued in many Protestant countries, where those who have freed themselves from the trammels of the Papacy use their liberty to bring their fellow-countrymen into a bondage equally galling. This has been more particularly the case since 1845, when in consequence of the question being agitated in the Storting, complete toleration was established in Norway. By the Act of the above year, Dissenters—that is to say, Christians who are not members of the Established Church—are allowed perfect freedom of public worship, and are permitted to form societies or congregations under the direction of their own ministers ; they are exempted from compulsory attendance on the services of the Church in case of baptisms, marriages, and deaths ; while they are not thereby debarred from public offices, nor prejudiced in their rights of succession to property, or any pri-

vilege of citizenship ; and further, while liable to the payment of rates for the poor, for educational purposes, &c., they are specially exempted from any part of such rates as may be assigned to the support of the Established Church or its officers. In Sweden, on the contrary, although under the same Government, no such liberty prevails ; for, according to the new law which was in agitation while we were in Norway, if parties who differ from the recognized confession wish to form themselves into a church, they must apply to the king for permission ; and this permission, if obtained, only extends to the holding of public worship within the church or church-yard of the community—not even a prayer-meeting can be held in a private house. Further, any one leaving the Lutheran Church receives a warning before the consistory ; and any one spreading doctrines contrary to this Church is punishable by fine, varying from fifty to three hundred rix dollars, or by imprisonment from two months to a year. This enlightened Protestant country, therefore, in respect of persecution, stands in the same unenviable position occupied by Rome and Naples before the recent revolution in Italy.

From the unlimited freedom of religious profession and worship enjoyed by the Norwegians, some might conclude that the country would inevitably be convulsed by religious factions and theological hatred ; but the contrary is the fact, for the people being left to themselves, as a rule, adopt the religion of the state, and are exceedingly attentive and diligent, in the performance of their religious duties.

If, however, we look a little deeper, and consider the influence of religion upon the minds and personal conduct of the people, we shall find the condition of Norway to be very peculiar. From the number of churches and the regularity with which they are attended, one would think that religion was in a very flourishing state. Such an impression would, I fear, hardly be confirmed by a closer inspection. A clerical traveller intimates that "there is no country in the world where the standard of popular education is so high, and the standard of popular morality so low; where the respect for religion is so very great, and the ignorance of religion so profound as in Norway." I am scarcely prepared to subscribe to this sweeping verdict, and yet, I fear, it must be admitted that the general uniformity of religious profession, notwithstanding the unlimited toleration secured by the laws, is not so much a proof of enlightened faith in the established religion, as of indifference to religion altogether.



CHAPTER XIII.

LITERATURE.—EDUCATION.—MODE OF TRAVELLING.
—THE FORBUD.—FAST STATIONS.—DIET.—
CONCLUSION.

Norway does not at present stand high in point of literature, and yet it has some glorious remains in the sagas of the middle ages, and the distinction of having cultivated literature at a time when Europe generally was in a state of gross intellectual darkness. The earliest notices of letters are connected with the runes, runic characters and runic spells, to which in the Pagan times of Scandinavian history so much potency was ascribed, no doubt (as has been suggested by a recent writer) upon the same principle on which the South Sea Islanders worshipped the chip on which Mr. Williams the missionary had written a message to his wife. "They were persuaded that there was a spirit in the chip; and the ancient Scandinavians in their superstitious simplicity, were persuaded that there was a mighty spirit in the runes."

Long before their conversion to Christianity however, they had a literature consisting of songs, tales and histories, chiefly preserved by oral tradition amongst the skalds and sagamen who were accustomed to celebrate the exploits of their kings and heroes in the ancient

Norse tongue which prevailed everywhere in these Northern regions. The persons of these poets and historians of the North were held sacred: they attended the court, the camp, and the battle field, were called to the councils of sovereigns, and frequently formed the most exalted alliances.

The mythological portions of these productions were first reduced to writing, and are preserved in the eddas, which form as authentic a body of Scandinavian theology as the poems of Homer and the Greek rhapsodists do of that of ancient Greece. Later the historical traditions, more or less authentic, were reduced to writing by the learned men of Iceland, and the sagas form the most interesting monuments of the middle ages. In the meantime the old language had been considerably modified, and gradually passed into the dialects now called Swedish and Danish, the latter being that also of Norway. But whether from German influence, from the Latin of the church, from the attention paid to classical learning, or (which is still more probable,) from the unsettled condition and warlike habits of the people, native literature was little cultivated, and it is only in comparatively recent times that the writers of Denmark and Norway have begun to employ the rich stores of poetry, history and romance, which have descended from the mythological and heroic periods of their history. Many works of great merit have been produced within the last century, and the prospects of the country in respect of literature are brighter than ever.

I have already stated in my notes that education is common in Norway, to which I may add that it is not perhaps of so high a class as that which prevails amongst the middle classes of our own country ; but it is of a useful character, and more generally diffused.

Similarly, in the collegiate institutions there is not the amount of fine scholarship which would be found amongst the picked men of our English universities ; but, leaving out the exceptional cases, the result of special and severe competition for honours, the general acquirements are, at least, equal to ours.

The university of Christiania was founded by Frederick, king of Denmark, in 1811, before Norway was separated from that kingdom ; and the system established, which still prevails, is that of lectures and examinations, which is so general in the continental universities. Candidates for matriculation have to undergo a searching examination, besides bringing with them a satisfactory certificate from the rector of the school at which they were educated ; but every facility is offered to their progress, and to their obtaining whatever distinction they may be justly entitled to. The professors themselves are generally men of considerable ability, and, in virtue of their acquirements, maintain a very respectable position in the society of the country. The fees paid by the students are very low, but the university has a large endowment of landed property, and is liberally supported by triennial votes of the Storting.

As, in these days of distant excursions and rapid locomotion, it is just possible that some of

my readers may contemplate a trip to Norway, I should like to say a word or two on the best mode of travelling in that country.

There is no doubt that Norway is a fine field for a pedestrian tour, and, if time and strength allow, this method will enable the tourist to examine the finest scenery in the most accurate and satisfactory manner. But, under ordinary circumstances, the wiser course will be to adopt the carriage of the country, already described, as the mode of conveyance.

The best scenery can only be viewed by encountering some little risks, difficulties, and inconveniences; and although, with caution and prudence, there is very little real danger, a nervous man had better not undertake to drive down some of the fearfully steep but magnificent roads on both sides of the Fille Fjeld.

I am not conscious of having experienced any trepidation, except on one occasion,—when one of my companions—the one with whose nerve I was least acquainted—having been unwell, exhibited on a terrific road what appeared to me to be symptoms of nervousness. The consciousness of the fearful perils of the situation with a giddy head rushed upon me with overwhelming force. On driving past him, however, and offering some words of encouragement, he speedily recovered his self-possession, and I never afterwards had occasion to feel the slightest uneasiness from this cause. But were it not for the excellent qualities of the horses of the country, this mode of travelling would in many parts be utterly impracticable.

The description before given of our mode of posting and of the general arrangements of the road, I ought to observe, applies but to one class of stations. There are two kinds of stations, fast and ordinary, the difference being, that while at the former, horses must be kept in readiness for travellers to a reasonable extent; at the latter, the farmers in the neighbourhood are required to find the horses; and, as this may occupy some considerable time, from the distance which the animals have to be brought, there would often be great delay and inconvenience, but for another regulation, by which the traveller may give notice of his approach. This may be done by a *forbud*, or messenger, sent beforehand, or, which is more common, by a *forbud-paper* sent by post to the various stations at which he means to change horses, the import of which is, that at such a station, at a certain hour of the day specified, he will require one, two, or more horses, as the case may be. And the law is, that if the horses are not ready at the time mentioned, three hours having elapsed from the arrival of the *forbud*, the postmaster or farmer is fined a specie dollar for each horse. On the other hand, should the traveller neglect to make his appearance at the time appointed, he must pay detention money to the postmaster, and, should he delay three hours beyond the time specified in the *forbud-paper*, the owner is not obliged to wait any longer, but can still charge the traveller one-half of the rate per mile for each horse.

The great disadvantage of the *forbud* system, therefore, is, that whatever change may take place in the traveller's plans, or however he may

be retarded by weather, or by the attractiveness of the scenery through which he passes, he must either hasten on, to keep time with the inexorable forbud, or spend a great deal more in posting than the ordinary rate.

The fast stations are, however, becoming very common on all the main roads ; and, indeed, we never had to wait more than a few minutes, except at two or three stations ; and, although we had provided ourselves with forbud-papers, we never had occasion to use them.

In a country like Norway, where there are no hotels, except in the principal towns, and where the habits and requirements of the people are of the most simple and primitive nature, it is important to ascertain the probability of obtaining an adequate supply of food. Besides filling the mind with images of beauty and grandeur, it is necessary to occupy the stomach with something that will sustain the physical strength amid the toils of an arduous journey.

In Christiania, Bergen, Trondjhem, Lillehammer, and a few other towns, there is no difficulty, as the number of strangers congregated for business or pleasure renders it worth while for somebody to attend to the supply of their bodily wants. Not so, however, in the interior, where a tourist must spend the greater part of his time, if he mean to see the country.

Fatigued, then, with a long day's journey, and his appetite sharp-set by the keen and invigorating mountain air, the traveller enters the station, which is to be his abode for the night, and requests something for his dinner or supper, as the case may be. I will not suppose him so

ignorant of the country as to expect a mutton-chop, a cut of roast beef, or any similar delicacy; but he may hope for a rasher of bacon, some nice white or brown bread and butter—in short, some such substantial fare as my farmer friends would be ready and willing to supply. I can only say, if he does hope for anything of the kind, he will speedily be disappointed; for the probability is, that even in the best stations, with such exceptions as I have mentioned, the only solid portion of his meal will be rye-bread, so dark, sour, and heavy, that even his hungry stomach revolts at it; or *flad bröd*, an article made of ground or pounded oats spread out into a large cake, excessively thin, and so dry and chippy, that a recent traveller compares it to the thin veneer of wood of which hat-boxes are generally made. To these may be added, as a luxury, some cheese, of which both the appearance, the taste, and the smell may well excite suspicion in the mind of the uninitiated. There is, indeed, another article of diet to be met with almost everywhere, which is extremely wholesome, forms a large portion of the food of the country, and is not peculiar to Norway. The Norwegians call it *gröd*, but in this country, I believe, it rejoices in the name of stirabout, or oatmeal porridge, and is really no despicable thing to fall back upon.

I ought, however, to mention, as a set-off against the poverty-stricken character of the food, that in the better class of stations you generally meet with nice fresh butter, which helps the oat and rye-bread on its way to the stomach; and that everywhere in Norway you

may obtain excellent coffee, and either cream, milk, or butter-milk. And even the *flad brød*, if you are fortunate enough to obtain it crisp and warm, as it comes from the oven, and spread with sweet butter, makes a tolerable meal, when you are a little accustomed to it.

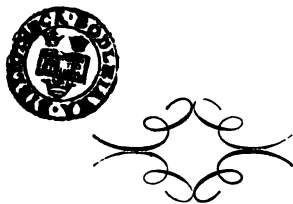
The moral of the whole is, that any one who is at all fastidious about his diet should take a supply of provisions with him into the interior, and must not neglect to replenish his stock at every favourable opportunity.

In this respect, the sportsman has a great advantage over the ordinary tourist, as he can often, from the produce of his rod or gun, make a very important addition to his *cuisine*.

The sportsman, indeed, who has also a taste for natural history, is the very man to go to Norway. He will find there ample opportunity of gratifying a scientific curiosity, and may even hope to make some addition to the store of human knowledge. He will have as much sport as he can reasonably desire, whether on the fjord or the field; and just so much privation, labour, and risk, as to afford a salutary excitement and give a healthy tone to both body and mind,—whilst the noble scenery which surrounds him in such a variety of aspects, will often tempt him to linger, and add an indescribable charm to his more stirring occupations.

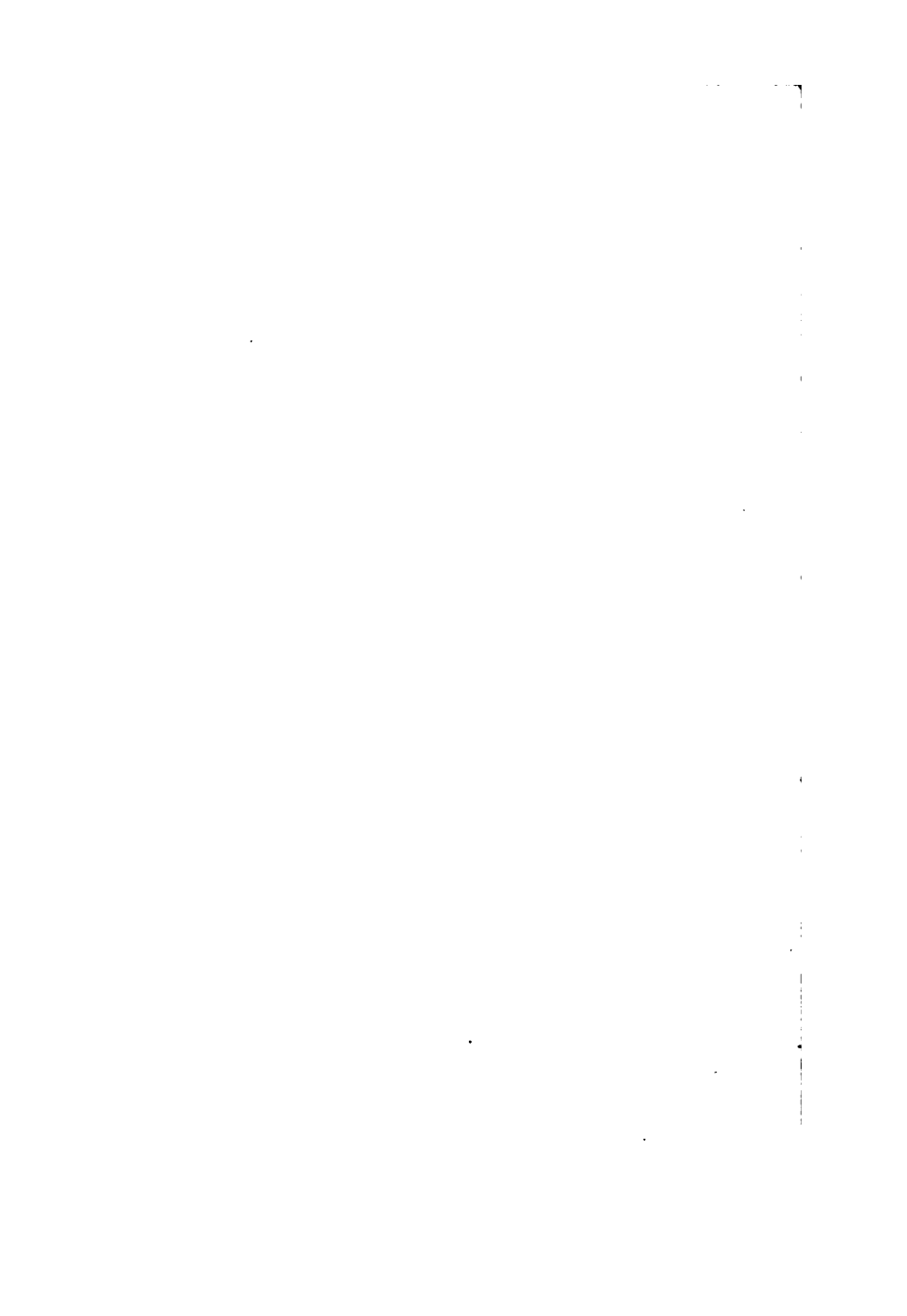
But I must close this hasty sketch. There are many topics which might have been touched on, but I should exhaust the patience of my readers. I have felt pleasure in imparting a portion of the information acquired in connection with our little excursion. My companions—

although neither of them has been consulted in the slightest degree in the preparation of these notes, would, I am quite sure, bear testimony to their general correctness, and will certify that I have not used the traveller's privilege of drawing the long bow. On the contrary, my descriptions have fallen far short of the reality, for I have felt my utter inadequacy to describe the scenes witnessed by us. But if I could think that I had afforded any amusement or instruction, and especially that I had excited in any heart a feeling of gratitude to God for the objects of beauty and grandeur which He has scattered over the world, and for the capacity of enjoyment in them which He has given us, I should be more than thankful.









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